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THE
SKETCH BOOK OF FASHION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS."

John Gore

Invest me in my motley ; give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleansse the foul body of th' infected world.

As You Like It.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE SECOND MARRIAGE.
MY PLACE IN THE COUNTRY.
THE PAVILION.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS,
No. 82 Cliff-street,

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1833.

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PREFACE.

THE following Tales form the last of a series of Nðvels, of a class created by the peculiar spirit of the last reign, and manifestly at variance with that of the present times. These sketchy performances, although favoured with critical praise far beyond their pretensions or deserts, have in some instances been blamed for pungency of satire, and in some for a character of levity. To both charges the writer is willing to plead guilty. The only apology admissible for a fashionable novel, is the successful exposure of vices and follies daily and hourly generated by the corruptions of society,—

Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
And touch'd and shamed by ridicule alone :

by *ridicule*,—which, if no longer admitted as the test of Truth, may be assayed in its turn by that only sterling standard. The sketches contained in “Mothers and Daughters” are sanctioned as correct, by the very class most interested in their refutation.

Nor is a plea of extenuation wanting for the tone of frivolity pervading their pages.—The first object of even the severest moralist is to command attention for his lessons : and modern society, “which refuses to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so *wisely*,” is well known to lend ready attention to the charmings of the light and gay.—If a single absurdity,—a single error,—have given way before the extended finger of these “laughing satires,” the object of the writer is fully accomplished.



THE SECOND MARRIAGE.

Qui se marie avec un veuf, épouse nu homme et un fantôme."

MONTAIGNE.



CHAPTER I.

Pol

By Tre and Pen

You know the Cornish men.

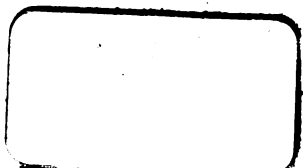
OLD ADAGE.

JULIA was the only daughter of Mr. Trevelyan. But although her father's county may be implied in his patronymic, his fortune and condition must remain problematical, unless the reader's mind is set at rest by the assurance that he was rich in five thousand per annum, somewhat more substantially founded than Cornish fortunes in general; and in a landed estate which would have looked much better on Stanfield's canvas than in its rude reality. Trevelyan Hall and its surrounding landscape were, in fact, so much more picturesque than pleasing to their hereditary denizen, that no sooner did the general pacification of Europe sanction the measure, than Mr. Trevelyan caused its rocks and woods and waterfalls to be specified in language far more efflorescent than the soil which gave them a local habitation, —inserted in the folios of Bates and Gillow, as "To be let for a term of years," —and without waiting for a lessee, who might be some time in making his way to the Land's End, —the Squire, Squiress, and their only daughter, "departed from Kirkham's Hotel, in Lower Brook-street, on a tour of the Continent."

The field was a wide one; the heroine admirably qualified to feel and increase its vast variety of interests. Julia was scarcely eighteen; handsome, intelligent, and good-humoured; with the lustre of youth still beaming in her character and countenance, unimpaired by the vigils and affectations of London life. Julia Trevelyan had, indeed, as much cause for gaiety, both of heart and manners, as can be

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tured, in her pink sash and shoes, to what concatenation of events her personal importance was owing, she would surely have evoked from the vault beneath the family portrait a line of vanished baby squires, emulating the ghastly exhibition of Banquo's crowned successors. The loss of Trevelyan Park would have been pure gain, coupled with the forfeiture of that morbid tenderness which induced her father to worry her and himself to death, whenever her finger ached; and her mother to live a martyr to imaginary evils hereafter likely to assail the "sole daughter of her house and heart." Mr. Trevelyan was in a perpetual tremor lest Julia should die and leave him childless; Mrs. Trevelyan in an unceasing flurry lest by some omission, some maternal negligence, a weak point should be left unguarded in her daughter's destinies, where sorrow might break in or the troubles of life gain footing, to molest this bright exemption from the sentence of fallen humanity. Between both, and solely in their excess of zeal to secure her health and happiness, the poor girl was fairly plagued to death.

The whole mischief arose from their want of better occupation. The squire and his wife had no employment either for mind or body. He was neither a reading man nor a sportsman; she was neither afflicted with a musical taste,—nor a botanical,—nor a puritanical; planted no gardens, superintended no Sunday schools; nay, she had not so much as a pet spaniel or a pet album over which to potter away her leisure.

When little Julia was rescued at last from Papa and Buchan, from the village apothecary and family medicine chest, to be inaugurated into the mysteries of the school-room, a new era dawned upon poor stupid Mrs. Trevelyan, redoubling in her estimation the importance of maternal nature. She had at length something to do, besides losing her keys and finding them again. She came to be consulted about back-boards and stocks, grammars, and dictionaries, Genlis and Edgeworth. Her opinion was as regularly asked by the new governess as if it had been worth having; and Miss Wilmot, during the twelve years she presided over Julia's education, actually managed to have her own way with her pupil, by persuading the lady of the Hall that way was of her own exclusive pointing out; that not a pincushion was planned, nor a sonata selected, except under her special jurisdiction. Old Trevelyan, indeed, occasionally interfered in the regimen of the future heiress of his honours; pre-

scribed ground-rice pudding instead of whole, and advised of-tea in alternation with mutton-broth. He even insisted on a pony as an interlude to the severe studies to which he saw the precious victim subjected; and managed, in spite of all his wife's hysterics, to accomplish the all-accomplished Miss Trevelyan as the best horsewoman in the county.

At first, indeed, it appeared the sole object of these doating parents to render Julia worthy of the auspicious destinies already provided for her. The elaboration of study to which she was subjected purported only to qualify her for her station in her own county and country, as the heiress of Trevelyan Hall. But no sooner was the miracle accomplished,—no sooner was her father convinced that (without having attained the long-predicted spine complaint) she had been made mistress of several languages, and that her drawings and etchings, bravuras and ballads, fairly warranted the annuity settled upon Miss Wilmot on her dismissal from office, than he discovered that she was much too good, fair, and clever for the atmosphere of Cornwall. His heiress had a right to become something more distinguished than his *mere* heiress. No one in the neighbourhood was worthy of her hand. Julia must see the world, must visit foreign countries; and whereas a prolonged tour on the continent promised an extension of her father and mother's domestic happiness by delaying her settlement in life, the project of going abroad for a year or two, was readily adopted in lieu of their triennial visit to London. With a huge patent medicine chest, and pocket editions of Mrs. Chapone and Gregory's *Legacy*, they accordingly entered the travelling carriage about to become their home; and although, by the time they rattled out of the court-yard of Quillacq's hotel, poor Julia had discovered that the hurry of travelling would not emancipate her from the troubles of her filial estate so much as she had hoped, it was indeed delightful to be released from the one gravel walk to which her daily exercise at Trevelyan Park had been for many years restricted; and the early to bed and early to rise,—the bread and butter breakfasts and roast mutton dinners,—swallowed on the unsilenceable authority of the great turret-clock, by which all her proceedings, moral and active, had been regulated from her childhood upwards.

CHAPTER II.

A cheerful temper, joined with innocence, makes beauty attractive, knowledge delightful, and wit good natured. ADDISON.

THE Trevelyans, visiting the continent for somewhat more than the usual purpose of catching a glimpse of the Louvre, crossing the Simplon, gaping at the Duomo and St. Peter's, and returning through Paris for the purpose of smuggling over a collection of Herbault's last,—had wisely provided themselves with the best letters of introduction. It was their intention, after passing the summer in Switzerland, to winter in Florence; Mr. Trevelyan having taken it into his nervous head that it was necessary to attemper Julia's constitution to the fervid suns of Italy, before he permitted her to bask in the utmost blaze of the sweet south.

In Florence, accordingly, they were very soon settled. The lovely and gifted heiress was accounted a charming acquisition to the musical circle of the embassy and the theatricals of the Normanbys; where even the hypochondriac father and prosy mother were excused and accepted, in favour of a beautiful girl in the entail of a fine estate and the possession of a host of charms. The Carnival came, with its sugar-plumbs and balls, and Miss Trevelyan at the close of its enchantments found herself on the road to Lucca for the bathing season;—having refused an Irish baronet,—a Cumberland squire travelling to be polished,—an honourable Colonel of grenadiers on his way to join his regiment at Corfu,—and a little chicken-faced lordling far gone in consumption, and bear-led by a reverend dominic, who already carried in his pocket the programme of his pupil's funeral ceremonies. Of these adorers, Julia laughed at some, and with others; sincerely regretting that there was

not merit enough among the whole squadron to form one venerable hero of romance; and that she was compelled to wander forth into the land of poesy, without having imbibed a little touch of sentiment to animate the landscape into brighter beauty, and lend new softness to the language of love.

Julia was gratified to perceive that her father and mother had no intention of parting with her on easy terms; but she little knew how indispensable she was to them, as a tenant for their empty hearts. In her childhood, the anxieties of her teething, measles, whooping-cough and scarlatina, had kept their feelings from stagnation:—Mr. Trevelyan had been saved from a severe fit of blue devils, one rainy winter in Cornwall, by an alarm of small-pox; and Mrs. T. had derived all the tragic interest of her life, from the duty of supervising Julia's interviews with the dentist, and first experience of her pony. But never had she been so valuable to either, even at the crisis of her typhus fever, as now; when the daily arrival of some new adorer afforded them occasion for new alarms, new investigations, new inquiries touching the endowments, temporal and spiritual, of the aspirant.—The excitement was delightful!

"With such a treasure to dispose of," whispered poor Mrs. T. to her friend the Dowager Lady Wadham, as they sat gossiping together at one of Torlonia's *soirées*, "I feel that I cannot be too vigilant. One meets with so many adventurers on the continent, even in the best society; and I declare I never feel easy when I see Julia dancing with a stranger, till I have informed myself of his name, nation, and all that is known respecting him.—Ah! my dear Lady Wadham, it is an awful charge to have an only daughter!"

"So I should imagine," replied the old lady, who possessed about as much sensibility as the velvet fauteuil in which she was seated. "I am sure *my* five girls never gave me so much uneasiness, all put together, as Miss Trevelyan does *you*. Yet mine were sad wild creatures, and we lived near a garrison town;—while *your* daughter appears prudence itself."

"Very true, my dear Madam. But one should do one's best to prevent a young creature from falling in mischief's way."

"And pray, who is that very handsome piece of mischief in Miss Trevelyan's way just now?"

"I left her in the other room dancing with the young Duke of Brancaloneo."

"Then I suppose she grew tired of him; for there she stands," continued Lady Wadham, raising her glass to her eye, "in earnest conversation with a very fine young man, whom I never saw before;—*there*, next to the old Marchioness in the yellow turban."

"God bless my soul!—who can he possibly be?" exclaimed Mrs. Trevelyan, in rising agitation. "Who can have introduced him to my daughter?—They are talking together very familiarly on so short an acquaintance; I must speak to Mr. Trevelyan about it.—Mr. Trevelyan never allows Julia to be introduced to people without his previous sanction—Where *can* Mr. Trevelyan be! He ought to be made aware of what is going on.—My dear Lady Wadham, you don't happen to see Mr. Trevelyan any where?—Really Julia should be more guarded. She is no longer a child. She is old enough to be aware of the imprudence of committing herself by making promiscuous acquaintance. I wish I could find Mr. Trevelyan."

A similar anxiety on the part of the Squire soon brought him from the further end of the room, to reciprocate his inquiries respecting Julia's new partner; but their united investigation yielded no further information than that he was a *nouveau débarqué*, just arrived from England.

"Perhaps it may turn out to be the young Lord Avonmore," whispered Mrs. to Mr. T. "I know he is bringing us letters from our friends in Yorkshire."

"Or perhaps it is the new *attaché* who is expected to pass through, on the Neapolitan Mission. I received a hint about him from the Turbervilles. Lord Durlington's second son; but with his mother's fortune settled upon him to the amount of five-and-twenty thousand a year. To be sure the Durlingtons are people of a very suspicious complexion; I should scarcely like Ju. to marry into a family with that clear transparent skin. There must be *pthisis* or *scrophula* at the bottom of the business. Not even Gowland could work such a miracle as Lady Durlington's face."

"Then the stranger yonder can have nothing to do with *them*; for he is as swarthy as a Moor. I declare, Mr. Trevelyan, I begin to feel a little fidgetty about the business. You must remonstrate seriously with Julia as soon as she has done dancing."

To remonstrate seriously with a creature whose light foot-

steps approach us in the confidence of perfect innocence, her chestnut ringlets carelessly shaken aside, her blue eyes glancing beneath them,—half-shy, half-tender—her white teeth exhibited by an incessant play of smiles and dimples—her sweet voice ringing like the carol of birds, is a difficult task. Instead of question or reproval, the old man found that nothing was required of him but to bow very low to the stranger, on his daughter's announcement of—"Sir Alan Redwood, a friend of my uncle Trevanion."

Mrs. Trevelyan instantly rose from her seat, and to prove by the length and depth of her curtsy how much she was satisfied to find him an Englishman—how much more to find him a Sir Anything Anybody—how, most of all, to learn that he was blest with the friendship of her worthy brother Trevanion.

Sir Alan, meanwhile, seemed to limit the extent of his personal importance to the consciousness of having been recently the partner of the loveliest girl in the ball-room. He bowed gravely, stiffly, *Englishly*, to the profound obeisance of his country-woman; and Julia was for a moment mortified by the coldness of his replies to her father's polite inquiries touching the health and journey of an individual he was addressing for the first time; and the dry repulsive way in which he suddenly quitted the group, and made his way to a sneering coterie of diplomats who stood strung together near the door.

"What a pity that he should be so ungracious!" thought Miss Trevelyan, as her mother toddled back to Lady Wadham to communicate all she knew respecting the illustrious stranger, and solicit further information. "He is very handsome—very well informed:—I did not foresee he could be so disagreeable."—and it afforded her real gratification, in the course of the evening, that Sir Alan Redwood should see how assiduously her hand was sought by the most distinguished partners in the room; and still more, with how much respect her father and mother were treated by the leading personages of the society. She almost wished, indeed, that her friend Lady Clairville had not introduced this same surly English Baronet to her acquaintance. But it did not much signify. He had already informed her that he was on his way to Naples; and birds of passage are too frequent in Rome at the commencement of the winter to render them of much account. Sir Alan would be off in a day or two, and would probably leave little occasion to regret his departure.

CHAPTER III.

There was no great disparity of years,
 Though much in temper, but they never clash'd;
 They mov'd like stars united in their spheres,
 Or like the Rhone by Leman's waters wash'd,
 Where mingled and yet separate appears
 The river from the lake.

ByRON.

IN spite of his own announcement, however, and in spite of the announcement of all the gossips, Sir Allan Redwood loitered on from day to day, from week to week. It was not, as Lady Wadham ill-naturedly insinuated, that he was disappointed of his remittances from England, and pretended a predilection for Rome merely from an inability to get forward to Naples. The English Baronet lived (as the English love to live) at the most expensive hotel in the most expensive manner; not only paying his way as he went, but paying a great deal of way that he did not go. Moreover he was a *dilettante* or *cognoscente* (as the English travellers love to be, in things that delight them not and concerning which they know nothing); and displayed much liberality among the *studios* and *ateliers* which are frequented by his youthful countrymen in Rome, much as Tattersall's and Hoby's are frequented in London, and where they seldom display much beyond their own ignorance. It was plainly no deficiency of means to go further and fare worse, which detained him so long in the Eternal City.

It is almost superfluous to notice that wherever the inhabitants of the British Islands much do congregate, there must inevitably be dinner-parties—not dinners only,—not good eating and drinking,—but *parties* of gentlemen and ladies, dressed in their best attire, to sit round a table, and partake of it in the most formal and disagreeable manner, precisely

at the moment devoted by other nations to the enjoyment of lighter entertainment, the theatres and the promenades. Even in the campaigns of the Peninsular war, even when superannuated cows and mules furnished the best part of the bill of fare, and the leg of an ass-foal was accounted a delicacy, regular cards of invitation are known to have been sent out by more than one gallant Colonel, whose baggage consisted chiefly in saucepans and gridirons; and even at Rome, instead of "doing as Romans do," it is the custom of our countrymen to gather together, per dozen, precisely at the hour and in the fashion they would do in Berkeley-square or Grosvenor-place. The Trevelyan's, who enjoyed the exact amount of popularity ensured by great respectability of tone, equipage, and establishment, were greatly in request at these ultramontane feasts. Sir Thomas and Lady Dunderhead, or Mr. and Mrs. Bumble Drone, were urgent for "the favour of their company," because they knew that the favour of their own company would be requested in return on the following week, to meet pretty nearly the same company, and feed on exactly the same quality of viands and wines, enlivened by a prosy recital of their morning exploits, and a general lamentation over the dulness of the English papers. They were asked every where; they went every where; and every where they went, it was now their fortune to meet Sir Alan Redwood; who, thanks to the taciturnity of his manners, had attained the renown of being a very sensible young man,—and thanks to his *brusquerie*, of being a very distinguished one. It is singular how much some people gain by making themselves disagreeable!—

Julia Trevelyan's estimate of the English Baronet who "said farewell and went not," was however very different from that of Lady Wadham and the rest of the cassino playing community. She did not think him a Solon, she did not think him a Saint. She did not conjecture that he would ever set the Thames or the Tiber on fire, drink up Eisels, or eat a crocodile. She only thought him the most charming man in the world; and herself the most unlikely woman to attract his notice.

Dinner parties of twelve seldom include more than one lovely Julia, or one distinguished young Baronet; and it was consequently their fortune to be placed side by side by the benevolent providence of their hosts, much oftener than seemed to suit the inclinations of the supercilious Sir Alan, or the delicacy of the sensitive Miss Trevelyan. She saw

plainly that he did not think her worth conversing with; that the long-winded inanity of her father and mother had inspired him with a very disparaging notion of the intellect of the family; that beyond the courtesy of placing a *beccafico* on her plate, he was in fact very little cognizant of her being seated on the chair beside him. Her pride at length suggested, that he might suppose *she* had some share in the arrangements for their dancing, riding, sitting, and talking together, made by the unanimous consent of society, without reference to her inclinations.

Dismissing the artless cordiality of her general address, Julia accordingly strove to insinuate an unwonted air of dignity, and even disdain, into her intercourse with her handsome countryman. But by this she gained nothing. Her reserve rendered him only more reserved,—her scorn, more fastidious; and whereas she had been previously amazed and distressed by rumours, that “Sir Alan Redwood and Miss Trevelyan were going to be married,” she had now the vexation to find that public report only modified the lie into “Sir Alan and Miss Trevelyan *had* been engaged, but had broken off the engagement.” All this was mortifying enough; and the more so, that Mrs. Trevelyan evinced no great indignation either at the first or second falsehood. “Nothing has prevented more marriages,” said she, in answer to her daughter’s expostulations, “than premature disavowal. Were I to set about denying the report, Sir Alan might say that it would have been as well to wait till we were asked; and perhaps make it an excuse for never proposing at all.”

“But, my dear mother, believe me, he is never likely to propose at all,” exclaimed poor Julia, reddening to the temples, at this specimen of her mother’s discretion. “Surely you must have observed, from the very first night of our introduction, his coldness, his moroseness, his every thing short of incivility towards us all?”

“Nonsense, my dear!—Sir Alan is a very well-bred young man, who does not go about shaking hands with and whispering to every one, like Sir Lucius Blarnymore; or pass his time in morning visiting, like poor little Lord Dwindleham. He pays us as much attention as he pays any one.”

“Granted!—and an additional proof that he is very unlikely to make me an offer of his hand. He talks to *me* just as he talks to Lady Wadham or the paralytic Princess Ronsiglione. Is *that* the tone for a lover?”—

"Why what in the world do you imagine detains him here at Rome, except the view of recommending himself to our family?"—

"Indeed I imagine nothing on the subject: and least of all that Sir Alan entertains the smallest interest concerning me or mine. Pardon me, dear mother, if I express a hope, that you have not allowed your conjectures to transpire among Lady Wadham and her set?"—

"My dear love, the fact is too apparent. They all see it as well as myself: they cannot help seeing it, and they cannot help saying so, and I cannot blame them. Consider for a moment!—Sir Alan arrives here with the intention of refreshing himself on his journey by a few days rest. Every thing is arranged for his departure;—passports made out,—trunks packed. He comes to Torlonia's,—dances with you,—burns his passport, unpacks his trunks,—and, on pretence of some nonsense or other, lingers on week after week, meeting you day after day, and daily more intent on the connexion."

"I scarcely know how to answer so partial a statement. But as it must be plain to you that he cannot marry me without your consent and my own, you will admit that he takes very little pains to conciliate either or any of us?"—

"Oh! that is his way. He is not a fop,—he is not a courtier; and being probably aware that nothing would be more gratifying to your father and myself than to secure so eligible a connexion, perhaps he thinks a waste of courtship superfluous."

"My dear, dear mother!—this is worse and worse!"—cried Julia, hiding her face in her hands.—"If you say only half so much to Lady Wadham, I no longer wonder at the cold contempt of his demeanor. To fancy that I am sitting patiently in the hopes of finding his handkerchief thrown into my lap:—and willing and eager to become Lady Redwood on any terms upon which he may vouchsafe to grant me the opportunity!—Oh! mother, mother!—why have you exposed me to such a humiliation."

"What can be the matter with you, child? I don't like to see you crying for such trifles!—I really begin to believe, with your father, that you are not well. He says the Sicilian wine does not agree with you,—that you look heated;—and wants you to take some Seidlitz powders."

"I should do very well could I but persuade you to dismiss the absurd notion that Sir Alan Redwood has any

particular object, any object in which I am concerned, for prolonging his sojourn here."

"But why wish to persuade me of such a thing?—It would be a great disappointment to me! I have set my heart upon the match."

"You, who love me so tenderly, would entrust my happiness to the care of a man we have known only six weeks?"

"Ah! but every one sees that you are very partial to him. In my opinion, Sir Alan is the only man you have ever really liked. I was telling Lady Wadham so, last night at the Cardinal's."

"Ah, mother, mother!—and a man too with whose principles and connexions we are utterly unacquainted."

"My dear Julia, you don't suppose that your father and I have been proceeding blindfold in this business?—From the very night of Sir Alan Redwood's introduction to us, from the moment I perceived that you had taken such an instantaneous fancy to each other, I wrote over to my brother Trevanion (with whom he said he was acquainted), to make the most minute investigation into the particulars of his family, fortune, and character."

"And supposing they have reached his ears?"

"Supposing they have,—what can be more natural than the solicitude of parents situated as we are situated?—I have little doubt that he is fully aware of the circumstance, and highly applauds our prudence."

"And what must he have been thinking of me all this time," faltered Miss Trevelyan; looking more like a heroine than she ever looked in her life.

"But, my love, you don't inquire the particulars of your uncle's reply?"

"It is quite a sufficient misery that the inquiry was ever made."

"Ah! you will change your mind, my dear Ju., when you hear that Sir Alan has nearly thirty thousand a year, and one of the most beautiful seats in Yorkshire; and that he is connected on all sides in the most unexceptionable manner."

"I am only glad to find that he has some little excuse for the self-importance I have always found so disagreeable."

"It is certainly some drawback, that the child loves; but, as it is only a girl, there would be nothing to interfere between your children and the entail. Trevelyan Park

might be settled on your second son, with a provision for change of name."

"Children?—daughter?—son?"—

"Yes, my love. She died in childbed, you know; and her family have the care of the child."

"To what family and what child are you alluding?"—

"To Sir Alan Redwood's, to be sure."

"Sir Alan a married man?"—

"A widower, my dear Julia. Your uncle Trevanion writes me word that the young man is travelling on the continent only to dissipate his affliction for the loss of his wife. A charming creature, he says;—*so beautiful, so accomplished*, and poor Sir Alan so tenderly attached to her!"—

"And this is the man we have been pestering with invitations to fêtes and operas!—No wonder he was so much disgusted with our proceedings. How frivolous must all my girlish folly have appeared in his eyes."

"We met him first, you know, in a ball-room. Lady Redwood has been dead a year, or you would scarcely have seen him capering about in weepers."

"Capering about!"—

"And from the moment people re-appear in society, they must expect to be treated like the rest of the world. Sir Alan Redwood cannot expect that we are all to be pensive and grave because he chooses to be sorry for his wife. Hush! here he comes."

"Pray, pray mamma," whispered Miss Trevelyan, as the baronet's steps were heard traversing the ante-chamber, "do not let him suppose we have been discussing his affairs; consider how officious and impertinent we should appear!"

It was probably an apprehension that Mrs. Trevelyan would commit her by some new indiscretion, that lent so beautiful a flush to Julia's cheek when Redwood entered the room. It was probably the new interest he had recently acquired in her eyes, which caused her voice to tremble when she addressed him. *A husband and a father!*—a bereaved husband—a father separated from his only child! Such sorrow as he must have undergone; such painful remembrances as must still haunt his mind!—Involuntarily her eyes filled with tears, as she remarked for the first time that his brow was hollow, and his lips feverish and compressed. How often must she have insensibly wounded his feelings—how often vexed and offended him!—Julia Trevelyan never discovered how far her predilections had outstripped her

intention, and how deeply, tenderly, and irrevocably her affections were pledged to Sir Alan Redwood, till she had reason to believe that his own were wedded to the grave—that he was a heartbroken and misanthropic man !

It was probably the sympathy thus developed, which softened even the harsh Englishman's intonation, as he addressed a few uninteresting inquiries to the lovely heiress. Blind as he was—blinded either by prejudice, pride, or mental affliction,—the perturbation, the tenderness of Miss Trevelyan's manner could not escape him. He drew his chair nearer to hers, and for a moment affected to interest himself in the drawing at which she was diligently working with a view to escape his coldly scrutinizing glances. Julia felt her breath grow shorter, and her cheeks of a more burning crimson. She was determined that he should have no plea for supposing that she had participated in her mother's investigations ; and replying to his questions with an abruptness almost as startling and ungracious as any he had ever practised towards herself, Sir Alan was for the first time induced to consider the beautiful Julia as wayward and capricious. He was indignant. He had thought better of her ; had regarded her as the least spoiled child of the most spoiling parents that the weakest human nature could furnish ; and intent perhaps on making his dissatisfaction apparent, assumed in his turn a harshness of tone such as induced Julia suddenly to let fall her pencil, and lift her large dark grey eyes to his, with an expression that could not be mistaken ;—with the deprecating, devoted, doubting, timid tenderness, of first and unreturned affection. There was no resisting this mute and involuntary appeal. Sir Alan Redwood, silently seizing the hand of the lovely artist, pressed it fervently in his, and would probably have raised it to his lips, had she not forcibly disengaged it,—risen abruptly from her seat,—and quit-
ted the room. Mrs Trevelyan was too busy with her knitting, and too slow of apprehension to notice what was going on. As Julia passed her chair, she saw indeed that the tears were streaming down her face ; and attributed her daughter's emotion to the agitating nature of the conversation they had recently held together.—She only hoped that Sir Alan was not so clear-sighted as herself !

CHAPTER IV.

I love him not,—nor hate him not ; and yet
 I have more cause to hate him than to love him.
 For what had he to do to chide at me ?

AS YOU LIKE IT.

FORTUNATELY for the happiness of man-and-womankind, those subtleties of sentiment which agonized the sensibilities of young ladies and young gentlemen of the days of the Harlowes and Grandisons, have vanished from the common-place routine of life. For many years past, we have heard of no female victims to the delicate distress of having given away an unwooed heart ; nor do we know a single marriage embittered by a recurrence of the Richardsonian paradox of who loved first, and why. It does not, however, appear certain that the moral turpitude of the action is by any means diminished ; and it is with fear and trembling we admit that poor Julia Trevelyan's heart was exclusively dedicated to the flinty Sir Alan, long before he had vouchsafed to press her hand, or even compassionate the tears he wrung from her gentle eyes. We admit that the conduct of our heroine was very blameable.—It was, however, very natural ; for the young Baronet was not alone the most attractive man with whom she had ever been acquainted ; but the only one, young and unmarried, who had evinced no pretensions to her hand !—

But now,—now that she had so completely betrayed herself, now that the unguarded weakness of her demeanour afforded him greater excuse for triumph than even Mrs. Trevelyan's manœuvres,—did he *now*, did he *still* maintain that frigid reserve, that mortifying apathy, which had so long borne testimony to the pre-engrossment of his feelings ?—Im-

possible!—He *could* not longer close his heart against a young, beautiful, gentle, accomplished, rich, well-born girl; whose devotion to himself was manifest, notwithstanding all her efforts, all her struggles, all her delicacy; who loved him in spite of himself—and in spite of *herself* also.

Yes!—Things went worse between them than ever!—A new shade of embarrassment seemed added to a mutual position, already only too embarrassing. Julia, ashamed of the emotion involuntarily betrayed, grew almost sullen with its object; while Sir Alan, instead of throwing himself at her feet as the happiest and most grateful of men, scarcely even deigned to occupy the place by her side forced upon him by the misjudging zeal of Mr. or Mrs. Trevelyan.

Whenever he addressed her it seemed by involuntary impulse; and though a close observer might have noticed that his eye from a distance was constantly directed towards her, and his lips when he *did* speak, compressed, as if by a strong effort to restrain his declarations, poor Julia saw nothing in his demeanor but increased reserve, increasing alienation. Very earnestly did she long for the first symptoms of the return of spring; for in the spring they were to quit Rome; and she had actually succeeded in persuading her parents to a voyage to Sicily, in order to avoid the appearance of travelling in company with the surly Redwood by pursuing their original plan of a journey to Naples.—But the first symptoms of spring were fated to waft new projects upon their balmy gales.

It was about the end of February; and a continuation of cold weather, such as, to use the Roman proverb, had “hung beards on the frost-bitten Tritons of the fountains in the Piazza Navona,” rendered a change of temperature peculiarly welcome; when a few days of sunshine brought forth at once the ready verdure of that accessible soil, and, as if by a magic touch, the gardens of Monte Pincio grew suddenly bright with flowers. Tulips, anemones, and hyacinths, started up as if long impatient for a summons;—the intense verdure of the yellow jasmine-leaves grew glossier and greener than ever;—the bright bay and peaked phyllereæ seemed to wake into vivid existence;—even the eternal pine-trees threw aside their mourning habits, and, if they still sighed, imparted a spicy sweetness to their sighs, as though grateful to the sunshine, that disdained not to smile upon their desolation. All the world was astir again. Superlatives were audible in the streets: “*Bellissimo!—dolcissimo!*”

—*beatissimo*!" were heard on every side. The Romans began to dream of their *villeggiatura*,—and the English to project picnics. Lady Wadham was wild to go and eat pigeon-pies at Adrian's villa; and Mrs. Green Smith and Miss Brown Thompson thought that a gypsey party to Tivoli would be the most delightful thing in the world.

In these expeditions, and fifty others of an equally incongruous nature, the Trevelyans were necessarily included; and although the old gentleman entertained a notion that *malaria* and the picturesque are two airy nothings very frequently to be met with in the one and the same "local habitation," yet, for the sake of seeing Julia scramble over broken columns on Sir Alan Redwood's arm, or hunt for wild anemones with Sir Alan Redwood by her side, he was very willing to eat his ham sandwiches or cold chicken in any ruined temple or desolated villa, selected by the bad taste of the indifferent society by which he was surrounded.

It would have tasked Miss Trevelyan's candour to decide whether it was by consent or compulsion that she found herself included in a party of this description, made by Lady Clairville, to visit Horace's villa, and dine *tant bien que mal* in the beautiful ruins adjoining the village of Roua Giovane. They were to pass the morning in wandering beside the shallow waters of the Licenza; or explore, on mules provided for the purpose, the woods and precipices of Mount Lucretilis, overhanging the favorite haunts of the poet. But when she found herself gradually led apart by Sir Alan, and conducted among the green thickets of arbutus, where the violet and orchis seemed springing under her feet, she saw no cause to repine having accepted the invitation, nor any reason to doubt that the object of her affection was for once intent on securing a *tête-à-tête*. The clear Italian sky was bright over their heads; the song of the distant goatherd, reaching their ears at intervals from the mountain side, alone disturbed the stillness of the landscape;—and never had Redwood conversed with her in terms of such endearing familiarity. There was nothing of love, indeed in his language; but a great deal in his tone. He talked of poetry and poets;—of nature and religion;—of every thing that people talk of when love is uppermost in their hearts and souls; and moreover, having persuaded her to rest herself by his side on one of those moss-covered stones marking the limits of the winter channel of the Licenza, which seem to have been lying there in their hoariness since the very days

of Horace, bent his looks upon hers with an expression whence all his former reserve was banished ;—an expression such as marks the glance of a human eye towards the object on earth upon which it most delights to gaze. He became abstracted, incoherent,—and Miss Trevelyan saw in a moment that the long-wished,—long-despaired of confession was at hand ;—when lo ! just as she was beginning to tremble with emotions of mingled joy and fear, a loud halloo from a dandy dragoon, a brother of Lady Clairville's (who being a jester by vocation was pronounced to be a great requisition to all the pleasure haunts of the ennuyées of Rome) announced that Lady Wadham and her Huns were at hand. Julia and Redwood had just time to start up from their sentimental post, and assume a tone that might better assimilate with the flippant bantering of their companions. But it was impossible to divest themselves of a certain air of consciousness, such as induced Lady C. to assure her young friend that she saw clearly "how things were ;" and Lady W. to offer her congratulations in an audible whisper to both.

Greatly, however, as poor Julia was distressed by their officious impertinence, she was far more so on perceiving that Sir Alan, instead of compassionating the dilemma in which she was placed, studiously withdrew from her side. They were now making their way to a dismantled fortress near Roua Giovane, where the banquet was already prepared ; and leaving her to the charge of the noisy blockhead by whom they had been molested, he now affected to offer his arm as the escort of Lady Clairville ; beside whom he sat during the repast devoting himself ostensibly and exclusively to her entertainment.

The tables being at length removed, dancing was proposed in the quadrangle ; and in a moment she beheld Redwood guiding the triumphant Lady Clairville through the mazes of a waltz !—Twilight stood her friend. Gradually extricating herself from the merry group, poor Julia stole silently away through the inner courts of the venerable edifice ;—tripped hastily over the short green grass, by which the intervening mounds of earth were covered as by a carpeting of green velvet ;—and having reached a little desolate nook of glais bounded round by the hoary walls and a wooden paling, sat herself down on the ground and covered her face with her hands ; the better, it may be concluded, to collect her thoughts and shape her projects for the future. Of course she would not have done so ignominious a thing as weep for the world !

But after a few minutes indulgence of these solitary ruminations, she suddenly started up; and would have quitted her lonely oratory almost as eagerly as she had sought it, but that she was forcibly detained,—forcibly compelled to reseat herself,—forcibly compelled to listen to a voice, the faintest accents of which, whispered softly into her ear, had caused her a moment before to withdraw the hand from her face and prepare to retrace her steps back to the company.

“Dearest, dearest Julia!”—exclaimed Sir Alan Redwood, “you are weeping!—What brings you here?—What has impelled you to quit yonder merry group for this dreary spot?”

Sir Alan seemed resolved to compensate himself for five months of self-restraint, by the sudden assumption of unlimited license; for he not only ventured upon the familiarity of Juliaizing the astonished recluse, but actually presumed to encircle Miss Trevelyan’s slender waist with his arm. It was not surprising that she should turn pale and tremble at so extraordinary an irregularity on the part of so regular a man, in the dimness of encroaching twilight and in the stillness of so remote a spot. She began heartily to wish she had kept with the rest of the company; for she had little doubt that the elated Baronet was under the influence of champagne.

Alas! *his* was an intoxication quaffed at a still more perilous source;—*his* was an intoxication against which both soda and seltzer are ineffectual correctives;—*his* was the intoxication of a passion long repressed, long increasing; of a tenderness only the more potent and the more exquisite, that it had been subdued by all the arguments and all the efforts which human resolution could suggest.

“You think me wild,” cried he, in answer to the silent shudder with which she repelled his touch. “You attribute my impetuosity to audacity,—perhaps to wine,—perhaps to madness.—No, Julia—dearest, most beloved Julia, no!—I am only too sober,—too sane,—too sad.—It is with the full force of my reason I am compelled to acknowledge how long, how intensely I have loved you; how painfully I have striven to conceal; how vainly attempted to subdue my attachment!”

“*Your* attachment!” ejaculated Miss Trevelyan, astonished out of her terrors; and already relapsing into the credulous confidence ever entertained by a woman towards the object of her affections. “Do not imagine me so easily deceived.”

"I do *not* imagine you deceived !—No ! it was impossible to deceive *you* :—I felt that it was impossible. With all my efforts to appear unconstrained in your presence, with all my anxiety that nothing should transpire to betray the troubled state of my feelings, nothing could blind your penetration ;—you saw and have seen from the first moment of our acquaintance ; the unlimited extent of your influence over my feelings."

It would have been much more to the purpose, had Miss Trevelyan persisted in feeling or feigning astonishment and incredulity. But Julia was incapable of art. If no longer surprised, she was at least gratified and penetrated by all she felt and all she heard. Moreover, the tears were very near the surface,—quite ready to spring forth again ; and without the least regard to her own dignity, she actually relapsed into a most unheroic flood of tears. Sir Alan received no very intelligible negative to his request for leave to hope,—and for permission to tender his proposals to Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan.

CHAPTER V.

Fair Hero is won;—and his good will obtained, name the day of marriage!

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

With two young lovers eager to be married, and a father and mother equally eager to hasten their hymeneals, there is little likelihood of delay. It was not much more than a week before Julia Trevelyan suffered herself to be persuaded into an opinion that nothing could have been more natural than Redwood's conduct towards her; and as to the squire and his lady, *their* triumph was unconditional. Mrs. Trevelyan had the comfort of proving to Lady Wadham how groundless had been her inuendoes respecting her future son-in-law; and Mr. Trevelyan the joy of discovering that Sir Alan's estates were full six thousand a year more extensive than he had been led to believe. Instead of going into the family of Redwood as an heiress, the fair Julia of Trevelyan Park would scarcely take with her an equivalent for all the splendours and prosperity of her new condition.

A day was appointed for the marriage about six weeks after the *éclaircissement* of the Horatian Villa, to give time for the return of a courier from England, where the legal preliminaries were to be adjusted; and in the mean time, the bride and bridegroom elect had nothing to do but to play Romeo and Juliet, in all the luxury of an Italian spring, while old Capulet and his Lady stood afar off watching their proceedings, and congratulating each other that they had not allowed their precious pearl to remain closed up in the dull oysterbed of their Cornish estates.

It has been already admitted that Miss Trevelyan's eyes were the bluest, her tresses the most silken, her figure the

most symmetrical, that imagination can picture. But Julia possessed a personal charm beyond even these important advantages. She had a countenance full of sensibility; a countenance the very mirror of her mind; a countenance over which the clouds and sunshine chased each other with the sportive variability of an autumnal sky; one minute, summer seemed lingering there in utmost glory,—the next, there was a cloud, a dreariness, a darkness, quickly to be dispelled by a new dawn of the refulgent sunshine of perfect happiness. And yet she was not capricious.—The changes of the weatherglass were solely dependent on the atmosphere shed around it by the one all potent orb, influencing the ebb and flow of her heart's emotions; and it was already in Redwood's power to overcast her sprightliest mood, or call up an April ray amid the utmost desolation of her tears. To repress this exquisite but fatal sensibility, Miss Wilmot had laboured hard in her vocation. It is true she made no boast on the subject to her employers; for she knew full well that Mrs. Trevelyan's alarms once excited, she would do her best to tranquillize her daughter's nerves by worrying her into a fever; nor would the old gentleman have hesitated to apply half the contents of his medicine chest to the aggravation of the disorder. She contented herself with striving to fortify the mind of her pupil with principle and her heart with reason; trusting she might outgrow an infirmity commonly classed among the diseases of youth. On retiring to her modest retreat at Devizes, the worthy woman even flattered herself that the danger was past; and knowing her pupil to be fenced round by the prosperities of life from the common cares of human nature, ventured to anticipate for her as bright a destiny as any child of wrath is entitled to expect in a probationary world. One might almost venture to conclude that presentiment had led her to expect that the object of her affectionate solitudes would fall into the hands of the high minded Sir Alan Redwood, with an income of forty thousand per annum; a very creditable measure of precedence among the Sir Johns and Sir Thomases, his brethren; and a character that might have borne the scrutiny of the most scrupulous club in the parish of St. James.

She did not, however anticipate, or if she had, would have repelled the notion as inauspicious to the happiness of the gentle Julia, that the very sensibility she had so laboured to exterminate, with its sunshine and shadows, its smiles

and tears, was the chief source of her attraction in the eyes of her future husband. Redwood was a distrustful man, and prized nothing more highly than the glass window thus enabling him to pry into the mind of the object of his tenderness. The enhancement of beauty arising from the variations perceptible upon Julia Trevelyan's dimpled face, were as nothing in comparison with the insight they afforded into her thoughts and feelings. "The eloquent blood," that spoke in her cheeks was a welcome tell-tale; and her tears possessed an oratory of unappreciable value.

There could not, indeed, be a greater contrast of disposition than between Sir Alan and the lady of his love. Redwood's commanding height, austere address, stern features, and impassive countenance, seemed only the sterner and more commanding, now that a flower had sprung up beside the rock, in contrast with its rugged coldness; and Lady Wadham and the coteries shrugged their shoulders and smiled contemptuously, when they saw them sitting together evening after evening, often without uttering a syllable, and certainly looking none of those things that are said to be unutterable. Julia, in truth, felt too happy, too contented, to venture on bending her radiant smiles on her observant lover; while Sir Alan was too much on his guard against the world, against its inferences, and above all, against himself to render his tenderness a matter of comment to the vulgar tongue, or of self-assured possession to his future wife.

Nevertheless, his expressions were not always measured, nor Julia's sweet looks ever hoarded up from his participation. Lady Wadham's eyes were not always upon them; and during those long spring days that intervened between betrothment and marriage, those days of growing daylight and progressive vegetation, when every morning dawned upon brighter blossoms and fresher verdure, it was indeed a holiday of spirit to them both, to wander together through the gardens of the Villa Borghese or some other belrespiro; while the old people sat prosing together in a favourite pavilion, bending their idolizing eyes from a distance upon the fair figure of their daughter; her white raiment glancing among the dark evergreens, like the shining radiance of an angel guest wandering amid the paths of Paradise.

How happy she was,—how bright,—how beautiful!—all her wishes accomplished,—all her hopes surpassed. It was no longer possible to doubt that Redwood loved her:—his looks, his words, his eagerness to secure her society, his

anxious plans to render their future life less world-absorbed than the ordinary career of dinner-giving, ball-haunting existence, all conspired to re-assure her misgivings. That he had sought her for herself alone, was indisputable ;—and her only care was to appear, or render herself worthy of, the choice which *she* (lovely and gifted and good as she was) regarded as an effort of the most gracious toleration.

There was still, however, one single speck on Julia's horizon—(what horizon *can* be altogether cloudless?)—which cast a hovering shadow over the airy distance of her prospects. The object of her tenderness *had* already loved ; the husband of her young heart *had* already cherished a beloved and loving wife in his bosom. Perhaps he was even yet influenced by the memory of those ties, that tenderness ?—Perhaps she was secondary in his esteem to the Mary whose hair still encircled his finger ?—Were not his thoughts sometimes secretly occupied in comparing *her* person with that of the first Lady Redwood,—*her* sentiments with those of his early choice,—*her* voice with the voice that was silent,—*her* smile with a smile now set for ever in the stillness of the grave ?—This dispiriting idea, once conceived, often caused her blood to freeze in her veins !—To be subordinate in a heart that was all in all to her !—To bear a part, only, in the destiny which was to her as the well-spring of her own existence !—

What worlds would she not have squandered to give utterance but to the smallest of her alarms on the forbidden subject,—to approach, even at a remote distance, the history of his wedded life ;—to whisper, “ Was she young, fair, confiding, affectionate ?—Did you love her as you love *me*, or rather as *I* doat upon yourself ? Have I cause to apprehend that the shadow of the dead will interpose between your heart and your living wife ? ”—But no !—such an appeal would have been hazardous with any created mortal ; and with Redwood *fatal*. Julia felt assured that, should she venture to breathe the most distant allusion to this delicate topic, he would start off, fly from her presence,—abandon her for ever ! He would give himself no time to reflect upon the anxious tenderness suggesting her uneasiness on the subject ; but dismiss her at once from his heart, and see her face no more !

Often, when they sat together side by side and hand in hand, in some sequestered nook among the espaliers of blossoming orange-trees of the Ludovisian gardens, listening to the busy murmur of the bees and watching the gradual

unfolding of the variegated parterres;—or with upturned eyes speculating upon that majestic vault above, which in Italy seems to connect, unimpaired by baser matter, the throne of the Creator with the earth his footstool,—a sudden thought that even *so* he might have sat, *so* ruminated, *so* eloquently discoursed of the glory of God with another and more congenial spirit, caused the sweet face of Julia Trevelyan to glow with a sudden flush, and the words to expire upon her trembling lips. What availed it to her affection to share the outpouring of his gratitude for the beauteousness and plenteousness of the created earth;—what availed it to trace with him the palpable connection between every good and holy thought arising in their minds, and the eternal and informing Spirit whose dwelling place was so bright over their heads;—if that earth held its chief influence in his mind as the resting place of her he had lost,—if that ethereal realm on high, shone brightest in his eyes as the spot where *she* was waiting to welcome him to yet more intense communion!—Julia,—Julia who in the excess of her attachment would have renounced every human pleasure and every human association for his sake, shrunk from this grievous division of his affection. It withered up the glowing pulses of her heart, to think that the love with which their energy was repaid was only comparative!

But where was her remedy?—what the alternative?—To love him less, to withdraw a proportionate quantity of her own tenderness, was impossible. Her fate was wrapped up in even that divided portion of his tenderness which he vouchsafed to bestow. She must be patient; or rather must labour diligently in all the vigilance of day by day devotion to his will, to conquer to herself a stronger hold on his feelings.

Such were the sentiments with which she approached the altar. Such was the moderated triumph with which this object of envy to so many, of congratulation to more, accepted the brilliant prospects that awaited her on returning to her native country as the wife of Sir Alan Redwood, Baronet, of Farminghurst Castle in the County of York, and Burnley Wood in the County of Middlesex; as the proprietress of the prettiest villa, finest diamonds, best equipage, and most ancient plate; the mistress in short of a destiny as bright and promising as even her too idolizing parents, in the plenitude of their partiality, could have selected for their only child.

CHAPTER VI.

Safe out of Fortune's shot she sits aloft,
Advanc'd above pale Envy's threatening reach;
As when the golden Sun salutes the morn,
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,
Gallops the ocean with his glittering car,
And overlooks the highest peering hills.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

ENGLISH newspapers are generally very busy about new married people. The arrival in London of Sir Alan and Lady Redwood was announced with considerable pomp; and the world was moreover informed that it was the intention of "the amiable couple" to pass only a few days in London, previous to their departure for their seat in Yorkshire.

Julia, who had not visited the metropolis since her attainment of woman's estate, had in fact very few connections there to induce a prolongation of her sojourn; and although they made their appearance in the height of the London season, although the suffocating atmosphere of many a ball-room demonstrated the fulness of town and the gaiety of the coteries, she had not yet been married long enough to have acquired the least ambition for the display of her diamonds, or the exhibition of her *trousseau*. Mrs. Trevelyan, who had given a parting charge to her son-in-law on no account to postpone Lady Redwood's presentation, or encourage her taste for moping at home, would have been shocked had she suspected that a few visits to the theatre in a morning dress, for the purpose of witnessing certain *chef-d'œuvres* of the English stage, formed the extent of her daughter's dissipation during this her bridal visit.

"Do let us get away as soon as possible," whispered

Julia to her husband, pointing out to him the moss-roses contained in the basket of a dirty flower-girl, who stood curtsying opposite the windows of the hotel. "The country is just now so beautiful; and I am so anxious to have a glimpse of my new flower-gardens, and a ride with you through Redwood Forest before the wild thyme is out of bloom.—Why not go to-morrow?—What have we to detain us?"

"You forget," replied Sir Alan, coldly, "that the Walpoles have promised to be in town on Monday, to give me a sight of my little girl."

"No! I did not forget their promised visit," replied Julia, blushing deeply; "but you never told me that little Mary was to accompany them. I understood she was at Weymouth for the benefit of sea air."

"She is at Weymouth. But Mr. and Mrs. Walpole are of course desirous that I should see her; and, concluding that so long a journey would be unwelcome to you, and that I should be unwilling to leave you just now, they have wisely and kindly decided on bringing her to town. Mrs. Walpole is a very conscientious, as well as a very sensible woman. However desirous of retaining her little grandchild under her care, she is too prudent to wish that Mary should be wholly estranged from her father."

"Could you not persuade her, then, to let us take the little girl into Yorkshire?" inquired Julia, involuntarily trembling at the notion of sharing Redwood's affections with any other living creature.

"No," replied Sir Alan, fixing one of his scrutinizing glances upon her face; "it would terrify poor Mrs. Walpole were I so soon to demand the surrender of her little charge. Besides, knowing you to be unaccustomed to children, I fancy she would be alarmed at the notion of Mary's falling to your care before you have acquired a little nursery experience. She implied as much, indeed, in the letter I received from her at Paris."

"The letter he had received from Mrs. Walpole at Paris!" —He *had* then received a letter, without adverting to the contents, or even acquainting her with the circumstance. He probably regarded the subject as too sacred for *her* participation. Mrs. W. had doubtless addressed him to advocate and defend the rights and claims of her grandchild; or perhaps, even with a view of keeping alive the memory of her daughter in his heart—of reminding him of "the

former Lady Redwood;"—or of "his dear Mary!"—Yes! he was certainly in the habit of calling her his "dear Mary" in his correspondence with her family.—His "dear Mary!"—Oh! that another woman should have possessed—should *still* possess sufficient dominion in his mind to be the object of his endearing appellations—his lingering regrets! Lady Redwood (the *second* Lady Redwood) turned coldly away from the window, observing in a tone of pique, "I dare say Mrs. Walpole is right; I am quite of her opinion, that the guardianship of her grandchild could not be committed to worse hands than mine."

The bridegroom was now piqued in his turn. Nothing had he so much at heart as that his gentle Julia should attach herself to his little motherless girl, and that an affection should spring up between them. It was in the hope that some proposal would arise on her part for Mary's return to her natural home, that he had encouraged Mrs. Walpole's proposal of bringing her to town; and partly in delicacy, or calculating perhaps too largely on the perversity of her sex, he had opposed her suggestion only in the hope that his apparent indifference would stimulate her own inclination for her daughter-in-law's company. Totally unprepared for her cool and abrupt dismissal of the subject, he was for a few minutes almost inclined to express resentment of her conduct; and nothing but the certainty that quarrels or reproofs would form a bad preparative for the tenderness with which he wished to inspire her, prevented him from assuring his bride that little Mary had too happy a home and too many friends and protectors, to be under any necessity for courting the kindness of a step-mother. It was only by hastily quitting the room, that he escaped the temptation of giving vent to his feelings.

But when they met again, all was forgotten! The child did not altogether engross the hearts or minds of the bride and bridegroom. Sir Alan, when he entered the drawing-room a few minutes before dinner and found his lovely Julia watching beside the window for his return, her cheek flushed with expectation, and her lips parted by anxiety, could not refrain from folding to his heart the beautiful being who started up and sprang forward to welcome him home. She had made an engagement during his absence to pass the evening at her uncle Mr. Trevanion's, and was attired in something more nearly approaching to full dress than he had seen her wear for two months past; nor could he resist

drawing back from her embraces to contemplate, with renewed admiration, the graceful turn of her head, the rounded outline of her arms, the symmetrical elegance of her whole person. The vexations of the morning were forgotten in Julia's delight at being again by her husband's side;—in Redwood's triumph in the lavish affection of so charming, so gifted a creature. He almost regretted that any other eyes were to feast themselves on her beauty; and prepared somewhat with an ill grace to fulfil their engagement to his old friend, the remote origin of his present happiness.

The Trevanions were what is termed "serious people." They were not methodists—their worship was strictly orthodox; but so strictly, that the worldly-minded, who grudged them a reputation and consciousness of sanctity, for the acquirement of which themselves had no mind to sacrifice the levities of life, branded them with the name of "Saints," and fled from the baleful example of their virtues. These it is true were not arrayed in their most attractive garb. Mrs. Trevanion's piety was of an austere and cheerless order; and her husband, if he refrained from the hair-shirt and discipline of the heretic church, scrupled not to apply a similar castigation to his mind; and on a point of principle, to make himself and those about him as uncomfortable as he conveniently could. On learning, for instance, the tidings of his niece Julia's approaching marriage with a man whom he had himself announced to the Trevelyans as every way qualified to render her the happiest of women, he considered it his duty to dispatch a letter to his sister, reminding her that misfortune lurks in the palace no less than in the cabin; and that sickness, sorrow, and early death, appear to delight in exercising their cruel influence in the homes of the prosperous.

To the eye of a man of this description the arrival of Lady Redwood, gay, fair, smiling, joyous, brilliant, afforded only a theme for painful presentiments. It was not often that so bright a creature sat smiling in his sober drawing-room; and while poor Sir Alan fell to the share of Mrs. Trevanion and two sanctimonious-looking individuals of questionable gender, who added little more to the conversation than a few hems and groans,—Julia was decoyed by her uncle to a sofa at the other extremity of the room, to be mortified into a more Christian frame of mind by his Jeremiads.

"I am surprised, my dear," said he, "that your parents did not accompany you to England?"—

"My father was of opinion that so long a journey was undesirable for mamma, during the summer heats."

"Then you should have persuaded Sir Alan to defer his return to England till the autumn."

"He has business in Yorkshire that admits of no delay."

"Could not your marriage have been deferred till it was possible for my sister and Trevelyan to come back with you for its solemnization here? My dear, I do not wish to blame you, but I think your duty to them might have suggested such a plan."

"Had I proposed it, my mother would have refused her sanction. She was very anxious to hasten the marriage."

"Ay, ay!—poor thing; I fancy she finds her health declining. My dear, I do not wish to alarm you; but at her time of life, health is a precarious thing: and there is only too much cause to fear, in leaving a person of her years in a trying climate, that you may never meet again. I am sadly afraid, my dear Julia, that—"

"Oh! no no,—pray do not say so," exclaimed Lady Redwood in great agitation. "I assure you my mother's health is much as I have known it for the last fifteen years. She has promised to be with us at the Castle in October; and I trust, my dear uncle, you will meet her there, and admit that your apprehensions were premature."

"I trust so,—I am sure I trust so," replied Mr. Trevanion with a deep sigh; "but I own I anticipate the worst. Pray my love, when has Sir Alan determined to quit town?"

"We are waiting only for Mrs. Walpole's arrival," said his niece blushing deeply. "She has promised to bring up our little girl from Weymouth."

"Our little girl?—Oh! little Miss Redwood I presume? Ah! poor little dear;—she comes home to live with you I suppose?"—

"No,—her mother's family are anxious to retain her some time longer."

"And you intend to sanction such a measure?"

"Sir Alan very naturally thinks that as her health is delicate, it will be better for her to reside near the sea, and with persons experienced in the care of children."

"But surely, my love, you intend to resist such a determination?"

"And why?—I can have no object but the welfare of the little girl."

"My dear, your own future happiness cannot but be of some account in your eyes."

"I must not pretend to be less selfish than other people," said Julia, trying to rally her spirits, which were sinking under the influence of her uncle's solemn tones and lugubrious aspect; "but I really see no cause to fear that I shall be a sufferer from Mrs. Walpole's kindness to her grandchild."

"Are you acquainted with Mrs. Walpole?"—

"Only from Redwood's reports."

Mr. Trevanion said nothing, but *looked*, "So much the better for you!"

"Sir Alan describes her as a sensible well intentioned person."

"Yes, very sensible; more sensible than tolerant or indulgent. She has great influence over your husband's mind, and you must take care that it is not exercised to your detriment. In your place, I should hesitate about having the child too long under her charge. Mrs. Walpole will probably inspire her with sentiments towards yourself, and general principles, such as may render her hereafter a somewhat uneasy inmate."

"Do you think so?" involuntarily ejaculated Julia.

"The life of a stepmother is commonly a stormy one," replied her uncle, without compassionating the alarm betrayed in Lady Redwood's change of tone. "You cannot be too much on your guard; every step you take is important to your future happiness; and I think it my duty to warn you that, unless you crush the influence of the Walpole family *now*, on your first assumption of your rights, you have every thing to fear from their ascendancy. Between ourselves, my dear Julia,"—lowering his voice to a still more confidential pitch, "the old grandmother is the most imperious woman in existence, and her daughter Martha the most artful and insinuating. During Lady Redwood's lifetime" (Julia shrank within herself at the name) "they did not suffer Sir Alan to say his soul was his own; and had he remained in England, I very much doubt whether he would ever have ventured to contract a second marriage."

"Perhaps," faltered his niece, growing paler and paler, more and more depressed, "perhaps it was to escape the thralldom of the Walpole family that Sir Alan visited Italy?"

"Many people thought so" rejoined old Trevanion, rejoiced to perceive that he had gradually subdued his sprightly niece into a proper frame of mind. "But take my advice, Julia. Resist from the first the innovations of these people. Show them that you are determined to be mistress of your own house, and to retain the superintendence of your family; and by exercising your firmness in the maintenance of your rights, and your fortitude in the endurance of their persecutions, you may perhaps have less cause than at present, alas! I have reason to anticipate—for deploring the day you were ever tempted to give your hand to a widower."

The "widower" was just then too close at hand to admit of a rejoinder on the part of his wife. Wearied out in patience by Mrs. Trevanion's tediousness, and the monosyllabic interjections of her two serious friends, he came to remind his wife that the carriage was waiting; and great indeed, was his surprise, instead of being greeted with the endearing smile he was ever in the habit of receiving, to find her looks haggard, her words incoherent, her whole demeanor changed. She suffered him to put on her shawl and reiterate her adieu to her uncle and aunt, without appearing to recognize his presence: and from Mr. Trevanion's door to that of the Hotel in Jermyn-street, not a syllable passed between them. Julia was silently weeping in the corner of the carriage; and Sir Alan conjecturing, in gloomy abstraction, what mysterious communication or remonstrance on the part of her uncle had produced so remarkable a transition in the mood and manners of his bride.

CHAPTER VII.

Love was a lambent flame that play'd about her breast,
 Light as the vapours of a morning dream ;
 So cold herself while she such warmth express'd,
 'Twas Cupid bathing in Diana's stream. DRYDEN.

THERE is no one, perhaps, more to be envied in this world, than a youthful bride arriving at the beautiful country seat which is to be the home of her future life, the scene of her long career of prosperity, the birthplace of her children, the shelter of her declining years :—unless, indeed, it be the happy individual on whose arm she contemplates its beauties, and to whose preference she is indebted for its possession. Often during their courtship, and still oftener during their bridal journey, had Redwood pictured to the delighted Julia the fine features and picturesque associations of Farminghurst Castle ;—had described the solemn grandeur of its woods,—the extent of its sea view,—the variety of its wild and rocky glens. Curiosity had long heightened the interest with which she regarded a spot, the scene of her husband's infancy and childhood ; and frequently had her dreams forestalled the moments of her arrival there, till she woke with her heart beating in imaginary excitement.

Since her arrival in England, these feelings had redoubled. Farminghurst was the spot appointed for her re-union with her parents, from whom she was now, for the first time, separated ; and she longed to be there ;—to make arrangements for their reception ;—to see the race of people among whom her destinies were appointed ;—to tear a leaf, if possible, from the book of futurity.

"In this world," says Rochefoucault, "our warmest wishes are seldom fulfilled ; or they come to pass in a way, or at a moment, which robs them of half their charm." Unfortunately for the bride of Sir Alan Redwood, the happy hour of her arrival at her princely residence, did not occur

till after her interview with the Walpoles and her martyrdom to the interference of uncle Trevanion. Even had he refrained from pointing out to her observation the alarming austerity of little Mary's family, she might, perhaps, have experienced some degree of apprehension on her first introduction to the nearest relation of her predecessor; but, aided by Mr. Trevanion's notes explanatory, she shuddered at the rigid formality of grandmamma's plaited lawn kerchief and powdered toupee; and could scarcely find voice to answer Miss Walpole's interrogations respecting her travels, given in a tone of dry catechismal regularity savouring awfully of the school-room.

So much, indeed, was the gentle Julia overawed by all she saw and all she conjectured of the Walpole family, that she took refuge, according to the custom of timid people, in an air of hauteur, and a tone of most repulsive coldness. Nothing could be more mortifying to Sir Alan Redwood than the constrained manner with which his Julia replied to the old lady's communications respecting little Mary's health and disposition. Lady Redwood, forewarned by her uncle, saw clearly through the assumed amiability with which the grandmamma was attempting to conciliate her confidence and secure her subjugation. But she was determined *not* to be caught,—*not* to be captivated; and instead of taking her little step-daughter on her knee, as she would have done almost any other child as pretty and graceful, and stifling her with kisses as her strong resemblance to her father naturally prompted,—she scarcely deigned to notice her; and concurred with the most ungracious alacrity in Miss Walpole's proposal that Mary should return to Weymouth, and reside with them another year. It was evident that this plan afforded as much satisfaction to the stepmother as to the aunt; but amid all Martha Walpole's delight at the notion of retaining for some time longer the superintendence of her motherless niece, it was plain to the mortified Sir Alan, that she had already conceived the greatest contempt for Lady Redwood's pride and heartlessness. He took little Mary into his arms, and strove to conceal his vexation of spirit by the warmth of his caresses: and Julia's reserve did but increase when she noted this excess of tenderness. The mortified father was no less indignant than afflicted. How could he conjecture that, after her careless dismissal of his child, poor Julia retired into her own room, to weep over the violence she had done her kind and tender feelings; or

that her heart was beating with agitation throughout the two formal interviews, in which she deported herself so arrogantly towards the family of his first wife.

Their feelings thus mutually estranged, it is not wonderful that the Yorkshire journey should be silent and cheerless. Sir Alan felt himself aggrieved, while Lady Redwood was of opinion that nothing but the most prudent management would preserve her from approaching martyrdom. *She* was constantly on the watch to circumvent the consequences of her husband's recent interview with her enemy, and to defeat the influence of the Walpole family; while *he*, attributing the strangeness of her manner to caprice, redoubled her uneasiness by his resentful abstraction.

Such was the mood in which the bride and bridegroom arrived at Farminghurst; such the temper of mind which imparted to Julia's beautiful feature an expression of sullen melancholy striking consternation into the old servants and chief tenants, and dependants, who were waiting in the hall and courtyard to welcome her arrival.

If the haste with which she passed through the crowd and hurried into the saloon, prevented her from hearing the universal but involuntary ejaculation, "Ah! how unlike my late lady!"—the feeling by which the phrase was dictated was too apparent in the countenances of her attendants to escape observation. Instead of the pleased alacrity which flies to do the bidding of a cherished mistress, there was an air of unconcern in the comings and goings of the domestics; and in answering the few trifling inquiries she addressed to them, Lady Redwood saw that their looks were invariably directed towards their master, as if *her* approval were of no account.

But all this was of very secondary moment. From the time of changing horses at the last stage, where the extreme obsequiousness of landlord, landlady, waiters, ostlers, little dogs and all, sufficed to prove that they were approaching the confines of home, Sir Alan had sunk into the corner of the carriage in the most mournful reverie. Instead of pointing out to her, as she had hoped and expected, his favourite spots, his peculiar haunts, naming such and such a wood, tracing the course of the river, and acquainting her beside which group of distant poplars the Redwood Mills,—and behind which jutting rock the village church lay niched in snug concealment, his eyes wandered vaguely over the wide landscape—the hedges flew by unheeded—the turnings of the

road brought new varieties of hill and dale before them,—but the bridegroom uttered not a word ! His mind was evidently absorbed in the past ;—“ Mary ” was doubtless again by his side !—and those

Love-storied trees and passion-blighted spots

were bringing back the tender remembrances, the hallowed regrets, which he had fled to Italy to obliterate. She ventured to steal a glance towards him, and saw that his eyes were filled with tears. How difficult she found it to restrain her own !—how dispiriting, how bitter was the sense of her own insignificance in his eyes,—of her own insufficiency to his happiness !

Arrived at home, the evil did but increase. Not a chamber,—not a piece of furniture but was evidently fertile in associations agonizing to his feelings. Instead of replying to her questions respecting one or two noble specimens of old masters with which the walls of the apartment were adorned, he retired to a distant window, and gazing stedfastly on the prospect, seemed determined to conceal his countenance from her scrutiny. Her first thought was to quit the room, and retire to the one appointed for her use ; but she was prevented by the fear of seeming too much at home, or wishing to forestal his arrangements. She did not like to inquire of the housekeeper the way to her own apartment, till Redwood had expressed his choice and intentions, either privately or publicly. Perhaps, in ignorance or malice, the old woman might point out the identical chamber he had inhabited with his first wife ;—her bridal chamber,—her death-bed. Perhaps, if the choice was referred to herself, *she*, unconsciously might fix her preference on the self-same room. And then, how terrible would it be to hear from the lips of Sir Alan, for the first time, the name of his deceased wife !—Supposing he should say to her,—“ No ! not *there* ;—do not choose that chamber ;—it was Mary’s ;—*it was my wife’s* ! ”

But no sooner did Sir Alan recover his self-possession sufficiently to quit his post and turn towards his lady, than he was struck by the paleness of her face.

“ Are you ill, dearest Julia ? ” he inquired, hastening towards her ; all his tenderness returning at the sight of her troubled countenance. “ Has the journey been too much for you ? ”

“ I am indeed greatly fatigued,” said she, recovering some portion of her bloom, as a guilty blush overspread her cheeks, in terror that Sir Alan should surmise the origin of her uneasiness.

"Will you lie down on the sofa till dinner time?—Or would you like to come at once to your own room?"

"At once to my own room," faintly articulated Lady Redwood. "But do not let me trouble you; I dare say Sterling can show me the way."

"No!" replied Sir Alan, proudly, almost sternly, "do not deny me the pleasure of conducting you thither myself. It is a happiness I have long and eagerly anticipated."

With the air of a culprit, Julia accordingly accepted the arm tendered to her support. But as she slowly ascended the grand stair case by the side of her husband, the whole scene seemed to swim before her eyes. Instead of noticing the fine bronzes decorating the hall, or the magnificent vases of Sèvres and Mandarin China placed at intervals along the galleries, her thoughts were engrossed by the consideration,—"Will he take me to his old room,—to *her* room?—Does every thing remain there as in *her* time?—Should any trifling object belonging to *her* meet his eye, will his feelings be overcome by the sight;—and will he visit upon *me* his consciousness of infidelity to her memory?"

Nor were her terrors wholly groundless. There is not a spot in the wide world where the force of custom is so powerful as in an old-fashioned English country-house. Routine reigns there with its most despotic rule. In the household of the genuine squire, it is held as impossible to breakfast elsewhere than in the breakfast-parlour, to dine in any other than the dining-room, or hang a hat in any other place than the hall, as it would appear to an official man to transact colonial business at the Home Office, or arrange some diplomatic difficulty by reference to the Board of Control. The Baronets of Redwood, for the last four generations, had appropriated to themselves a certain suite called the North Rooms, consisting of an ante-room, bed-chamber, and two dressing-rooms; and it would have seemed quite as extravagant to Mrs. Haynes, the housekeeper, for the master of the house to inhabit any other portion of it, as that he should build a nest among the jackdaws in the parish steeple. Sir Alan, in writing down to the Castle that Lady Redwood and himself might be expected on such a day, had desired, indeed, explicitly, that the Chintz-room might be aired; but as he limited his communication to this solitary order, Mrs. Haynes naturally concluded that some member of the "new lady's" family would accompany them, to whose use it was destined; and had been careful to direct the footman to carry

my lady's trunks and imperials to the North Room, and to induct my lady's maid, Mrs. Sterling, into the same locality.

When Sir Alan accordingly threw open the pretty airy chamber he had selected for his wife, nothing was visible but the noble prospects from the windows, the lofty chintz bed, and the snowy muslin toilet-table. There were no packages, —no dressing-boxes,—no Mrs Sterling; and the truth instantly flashed on his mind. He started with an involuntary shudder at the idea of the annoyance he had escaped by offering himself as Lady Redwood's conductor. The movement did not escape her. Nothing could be plainer than his agitation; and she was now convinced that "Mary" had actually breathed her last in the lofty chintz bed,—had directed her dying eyes to that beautiful landscape, and taken her last look of her own faded countenance in that very tiring mirror! It was well for her that Sir Alan hastily quitted the room to give orders for the removal of her baggage to her new apartment, or her perturbation could not have passed unnoticed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Oh! noble Love!
That thou couldst be without this jealousy,
Without this passion of the heart,—how lovely
Wouldst thou appear!

BRAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

LADY REDWOOD had now been two months a wife. Her bridal awkwardness had in some measure worn off; and she was now familiarized to the custom of sitting at the head of the table, and undergoing all the formal ceremonial of dinner.

But on entering the magnificent eating-room at Farminghurst Castle, a new source of embarrassment overcame all her self-possession. It was not the sight of the magnificent family pictures, the Barons Redwood by Holbein and Zuccherro, and Baronets by Vandyke, Lely, Kneller, and Reynolds;—it was not the gorgeous beauty of Venetia Lady Redwood, from the pencil of Gervas; or of Selina Lady Redwood, from the hand of Hoppner, that suspended her footsteps on the threshold;—it was, that she was about herself to assume the post of *Mary Lady Redwood*—it was that she was about to occupy, directly in the eyes of Sir Alan, the place and station filled by his late wife! As she advanced towards the board spread with costly plate, and a dinner of the most *recherché* kind, she almost expected to find “the table full:” to see her predecessor, pale and menacing as the ghost of Banquo, arise and “push her from her stool!” Sir Alan saw her hesitation; but, not understanding its motive, said and did nothing to assist her.

“This long table looks tremendously formal, faltered Julia, flushing scarlet, with the effort she made to speak.

"Will you allow me to have my chair placed nearer to you?—I think I should like to act company to-day, and sit at your right hand."

"Willingly, willingly," cried Sir Alan, for a moment pleased by a proposal that seemed to spring from the desire of being near him. "Mansel! place Lady Redwood's chair here." And he looked smilingly upon her, and would have extended his hand to welcome her to her new seat, but that he was restrained by the attendance of two or three inquisitive servants. He had not, however, finished his soup before his views of the case were entirely altered. He now conjectured that the beautiful Julia disdained to preside over his household board: that she despised the common-place regularity of his old-fashioned mansion; that she was determined to play the fine lady from the beginning, by a refusal to comply with even the most ordinary forms of matronly duty. How often had he heard the equanimity of her temper set forth by the encomiums of her doating parents! How often had Mr. Trevelyan assured him that, from the hour of her birth to that which saw her at the altar, she had never given them a single moment's uneasiness; never frustrated their will; never thought or acted but at the suggestion of those in authority over her! Alas, poor man!—he had been but eight weeks a husband, and already Lady Redwood had contrived to wound his feelings, mortify his pride, disturb his prejudices, traverse the customs of his house, and alienate his child from his roof. This was his gentle, sweet, submissive bride; this was the lovely being who, for six months of careful deliberation, he had watched, examined, probed, assayed, in selfish anxiety to secure himself from an ill-assorted marriage—an unquiet home!

Vexatious, indeed, was that first evening passed at the Castle!—Julia sat apart with swelling bosom and gloomy countenance; framing within herself a thousand wild conjectures—a thousand mournful forebodings;—while Sir Alan, seated in his arm-chair, bent his head over a book, to conceal his distemperature of spirits and countenance. Lady Redwood attributed all this discomposure to the lingering influence of his first wife. But she was mistaken: it was the second only—it was *herself*—who was the cause of his uneasiness.

It is not to be supposed that a friend so highly esteemed as the worthy Maria Wilmot, had been neglected by her pupil on occasion of the brilliant marriage which had

crowned the destinies moulded under her auspices. Many a querulous letter had been despatched from Rome to Devizes, during poor Julia's season of tender disquietude; and when the auspicious moment of proposal and acceptance came at last, her kind preceptress was the first and only person to whom the lovely heiress addressed a confession of her triumph.

"I know you will be satisfied with my prospects," wrote poor Julia, "I am persuaded that even you, so indifferent to the value of worldly things, will admit me to be a very fortunate, and likely to be a very happy woman. Sir Alan Redwood's principles are as severe as even you, my dear friend, could desire. I am not going to marry the flirty, frivolous man of fashion you have so often laughingly predicted to me. My chosen husband is fonder of solitude than society,—of the country than town,—of books than men,—of study than pleasure. We shall forget the world in each other's sole society, and spend the greater portion of our lives at Farminghurst and Trevelyan. I have not a hope or a wish ungratified, unless that I may have virtue to support as I ought, so unmerited an influx of prosperity."

To this effusion of girlish ecstasy, Miss Wilmot replied more after the manner of the governess than of the woman of the world. Instead of perceiving that Julia, flattered into a goddess, was inaccessible to vulgar arguments of mortal policy, or lessons of divine wisdom, she wrote to remonstrate with her young friend's too confident elation of spirits,—to remind her of the instability of sublunary happiness. Uncle Trevanion might have been, perhaps, more prosy, but he could not have been more ill-judging; for Julia, apprehensive of provoking a further rebuke, refrained from all communication with her prudent admonitress.

Experience had not yet taught her how welcome is the refreshing verdure of the evergreen of friendship after the summer flowers of love have blossomed and died away! But no sooner was the sky overcast, no sooner did the occurrences of her London visit tend to remind Lady Redwood that she was not alone exempted from the common cares of humanity, than her spirit yearned towards the kind and wise woman who had so often cheered her under the petty vexations arising from the over solicitude of her parents. It was not over solicitude from which she was *now* suffering, it was not the dread that Sir Alan should love her too tenderly for her comfort, that rendered her stay in Jer-

myn-street so uneasy—her journey to the north so tedious ; and yet the present irritation had precisely the same effect as her transient Trevelyan Park fits of the sorrowfuls ;—for it made her eager for Miss Wilmot's assuaging pity, Miss Wilmot's cheering arguments, Miss Wilmot's mild philosophy. As she sat on the evening of her arrival, with her eyes now intent on her husband's studies and now on the pattern of his carpet, she was revolving in what terms to address her old friend so as to obtain her counsel and commiseration, without rendering her too anxious, or inducing her to hasten the return from Italy of Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan, and above all, without inferring an unkind feeling towards Sir Alan.

Unluckily, the evening was only too propitious to Julia's desponding frame of mind. Summer was already on the wane, and the Autumn seemed inclined to look in upon the earth and remind it of stormy days to come. A high wind arose during dinner, which now howled desolately among the high old Gothic chimnies, and swept fearfully along the echoing corridors. Distant doors (the sound of which, at present unfamiliar to her, seemed ominous and awful) now and then clapped to with a startling noise. The very candles beside which Sir Alan Redwood sat reading, flared and fleckered with the gusts of wind that penetrated the old fashioned oriel windows. Nothing could be more desolating than the sounds and sights around her.

At length, the butler entered with his tray of bed candlesticks, and an inquiry whether her ladyship chose supper ; and great indeed was the surprise of the old man to observe the bride-groom seated in his usual reading chair, tranquilly perusing a new number of the Quarterly Review and the bride at the opposite side of the room with a work box open on the table near her, but evidently doing nothing and saying as little. " If this is new-fashioned honey-mooning," thought old Mansel (as he proceeded to inform the household that my lady did not eat supper, and that Mrs. Sterling was to go up to my lady's room)—" give ~~me~~ the *old*. I never saw Sir Alan so down-hearted in my late lady's time. Pray Heaven things may be going on right between the young people."

According to Lady Redwood's order, her own maid was now sauntering up the back staircase to await her in her dressing-room. But had not Julia been afraid of exciting Sir Alan's surmises, she would certainly have desired Mrs. Sterling to attend on her at the drawing-room door to accom-

pany her to her chamber. Between the dispiriting state of the weather and the train of reflections she had been pursuing, it was far from agreeable to her to think of crossing the great hall alone. But having lingered a considerable time in the hope her husband would bear her company, she suddenly took up her candle and prepared to quit the room.

Sir Alan who was seriously hurt and displeased, now raised his eyes from his book, with a cold inquiry, whether she could find her way; and Julia's pride, doubly roused by his tone of indifference, naturally suggested an answer in the affirmative. With faltering steps she accordingly made her way along the dimly illuminated vestibules and passages, where the tall bronze statues seemed frowning at her from their niches as she passed. The grand staircase was painted in fresco with devices of some Roman triumph; and casting a trembling glance upon its phalanxes, Lady Redwood could have almost persuaded herself that the eyes of the centurions glared out fiercely upon her. With hurried footsteps she hastened along the passage she had traversed before dinner on Sir Alan Redwood's arm; but now, in her trepidation nothing was easier than to mistake the door of her own room, when with a trembling hand she flung open the one she fancied must belong to the chintz bed-chamber. She was mistaken. It was that of an old fashioned apartment seldom used; and the first thing that greeted her was the funeral achievement of the late Lady Redwood, with its black bordering, and skull and cross bones; which had been taken down in expectation of her arrival, and put there to be out of the way!

With some difficulty Julia refrained from shrieking aloud as this ill-omened object met her view. But hastily withdrawing from the unlucky chamber, she called aloud for Mrs. Sterling, and in a minute the smart person of her attendant emerged from a door at the further end of the corridor; and, for a moment, Lady Redwood's nervous terrors were tranquillized.

One of the happy results of the strict system of Julia's education was a disinclination for familiarity with servants. She was not in the habit of conversing with her maid on any thing but the duties of her calling; and Mrs. Sterling would have been as much astonished at an idle question from the lips of her young mistress, as from those of one of the statues in the hall. Nevertheless, on the present occasion Lady Redwood would have given worlds for courage to

hazard a single sentence with her attendant. But she was still so young,—so timid,—so apprehensive of provoking impertinent criticisms, that the words expired on her lips as she attempted to frame an inquiry whether the chamber appropriated to her use was in truth that of her predecessor. Mrs. Sterling, meanwhile, catching a few words, managed, to confirm her suspicions. “The housekeeper had orders from Sir Alan,” she said, “that every thing should be exactly as it was in her *late lady's* time ;” and the long process of brushing and curling the *present lady's* beautiful chesnut hair, and of folding and laying aside the present lady's silken robes, being at length completed, the waiting-woman, tired by her day's journey, hastened to light the night-lamp, draw the bed curtains, and inquire at what hour Lady Redwood would please to be called on the following morning ;—adding that “her late ladyship always breakfasted with Sir Alan, in the study, at nine o'clock.”

Julia knew not what she answered. She was wondering what construction Sterling would put upon her conduct, should she desire her to stay till her master made his appearance. But while still framing the terms of the request so as to make it appear as unimportant as possible, the sleepy woman glided out of the room, and the sleepless one was left alone.—*Alone !*

The wind howled ; a wailing voice seemed mingled with its whistling gusts ; and the flame of the veilleuse was bowed almost into darkness, as they swept too and fro over its crystal vase. Lady Redwood had listened and listened, for the retiring footsteps of her maid,—but all was now silent ;—she heard nothing but the panting of her own breath, as she lay half hidden among her downy pillows. Perhaps Redwood might be already in his dressing-room ?—and why should she patiently endure the perturbation by which she was oppressed, when a slight effort of courage would bring her into his presence ?—She abjured her pride,—she forgot her pique ;—she determined (whatever construction he might place on the proceeding) to make her way into his room. Stealing from the bed without pausing to throw on her dressing-gown but hastily inserting her feet in her silken slippers, she seized the veilleuse ; and opening the door of her own dressing-room, which divided that of Sir Alan from the bed-chamber, was about to traverse it, when an irresistible impulse induced her to shrink back and close the door. There is something in the aspect of a large, dark, deserted,

unfamiliar chamber, dimly lighted by a lamp, very uninviting to a person of weak nerves. The thought struck her that even there the late Lady Redwood had probably lain in solemn preparation for the grave;—that there—in that room, which she must have often crossed in the happy familiarity of matronly affection to consult with her husband,—in that very room the trappings of her funeral array had probably darkened the cheerful hangings and displaced the gay furniture.

“This is childish,—this is degrading!” faltered poor Julia, as the moisture rose on her brow; and she sat down on the nearest chair with the *veilleuse* in her hand, in hopes to regain her strength and courage. “A moment’s space would suffice to convey me to dear Redwood’s presence. In *his* arms I should forget all these foolish fears. I *will* cross the dressing-room.—What is there to alarm me?”

Again she listened;—again the wind howled fearfully in the corridor. Nay, its voice seemed breathing with a peculiarly melancholy inflection from the very bed she had just quitted.—Its long curtains carefully drawn around, now seemed to exclude her; or rather, to conceal some unseen and mysterious occupant. “It was *there* she used to lie;—it was *there* her expiring breath called upon Redwood’s name;—perhaps adjuring him to be faithful to her memory,—perhaps,—I cannot—cannot stay here; I will go to him,” sobbed the agonized Julia; and again throwing open the door of the dressing-room, with the ordinary impression of nervous persons that something was pursuing her which she dared not turn round and confront, she crept across the shadowy apartment.

But, lo! scarcely had she attained half the way, when the opposite door opened slowly, and a tall white figure, partly enveloped in a black drapery, stood before her. She saw not the face of the spectre; but with one long piercing shriek, fell insensible on the floor!

CHAPTER IX.

Stay illusion !
 If thou hast any sound or use of voice,
 Speak to me !
 If there be any good thing to be done
 That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,
 Speak to me !

HAMLET.

It is an unlucky circumstance, inseparable from the forms of civilized life, that domestic catastrophes can no longer take place without the intervention of servants ; by whose voluminous reporting, cases of squabbles between my lord and my lady at the dinner the breakfast or the supper table, —during an airing in the britschka, or a row on the lake,—are sure to find their way all over the country. Sir Alan Redwood's first impulse on finding his Julia cold and breathless on the floor of her dressing-room, was to ring violently for the assistance of her maid ; and both Mrs. Sterling, and the housekeeper, and even old Mansel, contrived to make their appearance on the scene in time to see her lying insensible on the sofa, with "master" bending over her, as well as to hear the first incoherent expressions of her returning conscientiousness. "Redwood, Redwood, why did you bring me hither?—Why expose me to this horrible visitation?"—It was necessarily settled in the steward's room the following morning, that "my lady had *seen something*!"

"My lady's" popularity in her new household, which had already assumed a very doubtful aspect, was now at an end. "If their poor dear first lady could not rest in her grave because of Sir Alan's giving such a stepmother to poor dear little Miss Mary, the case must be very bad indeed!" The under-housemaid protested "she would not stand in my lady's

shoes, not for the vally of all the 'state of Farminghurst Castle ;" and one very nervous laundry-maid, much addicted to novels and green tea, actually resigned office, and went to wring wet linen and her own hands in some less ghostly establishment."

The first thing accordingly that transpired of the new Lady Redwood in the neighbouring town of Farmington, was that the castle became haunted from the moment she set foot in it ; and that she was a proud, arrogant, hoity-toity woman, who would not so much as sit at the head of her husband's table ! Rumours, like clouds, gather as they go. The children belonging to the late Lady Redwood's various village schools, having imperfectly caught the general tenor of the reports gossipped over beside the cottage hearths, mistaking the effect for the cause, insisted that the new lady herself was the spectral apparition ; and the first time poor Julia, recovering from her temporary indisposition, drove down to the village in the pony-cart with her husband, a general consternation seemed to seize the little congregation drawn out for her inspection. Instead of receiving with joyful gratitude the largesse bestowed upon them by their new patroness,—instead of looking with admiration on her snowy robes and beautiful face, the trembling urchins held together by the hand with looks of terror and aversion, and regarded her benefaction as " fairy money," likely to bring misfortunes on the possessor.

Tears came into Lady Redwood's eyes as she quitted the school-house. She could not blind herself to the ungracious mode of her reception,—to the stern glances bent on her by the schoolmistress,—to the loathing looks of the poor children. " I see how it is," thought she, as the pony-chaise jolted along a beautiful green lane, matted with hazel bushes and fragrant with honeysuckle ; " they were too long the objects of the first Lady Redwood's bounty to look on *me* without disgust. They regard me as an interloper ;—I will never go among them again."—

" I trust, dearest Julia," whispered Sir Alan, pleased to see the old people totter to the doors of the several cottages to make an obeisance to his beautiful bride, " I trust you will find an interesting source of occupation in promoting the welfare of these poor creatures. I have been accustomed to regard them as a charge committed to my guardianship. I am sure you will aid me in the discharge of so sacred a duty ;—I am sure you will visit and comfort them ?"—

I have been accustomed" sounded in the ears of poor Lady Redwood very like "Mary and I were accustomed." Her heart, which was aching before, rebelled against the instigation. "I can trust to Sterling," said she, "to be my delegate. Papa never liked me to go into the cottages at Trevelyan; he fancied my health might suffer."

Stung to the heart by her cold selfishness, Sir Alan unconsciously administered a sharp cut of the whip to the little Shetland he was driving. Hard-heartedness in a woman is a hideous thing;—hard-heartedness in a wife is a revolting one; hard-heartedness in Julia—the beauty, the heiress, the favoured of Heaven, a crying sin! He might perhaps have been tempted to give vent to his feelings, but that they were now entering the vicarage-lane; and that a low paling, surmounted by a wall of Portugal laurel, dominated by six tall steeples of poplar trees, ancient and stalwart and mossy, soon proclaimed them to have arrived at their destination. Although she had set out with the intention of a bridal visit to Dr. and Mrs. Hobart, the vicar and vicaress of Farmington, Lady Redwood would now have willingly declined the exertion; but on mentioning to Sir Alan that she was suffering from an excruciating head-ach, his hasty reply demonstrated that the vicarage visit was inevitable. Remembering the brilliant bloom with which she had made her appearance at the breakfast table, and unaware of the painful impressions she had been imbibing at the school-house, he did not hesitate to attribute her plea to caprice or affectation. She wanted to play the fine lady to Mrs. Hobart, or the despot to himself. Resistance was useless; Julia, mildly submitting to his decree, soon found herself stepping from the chaise under a porch covered with a profusion of the sweet scented clamatis.

Having reached the parlour, a small compact wooden figure, in a slate coloured gown, rose, curtsied, and pointed to a very severe looking arm-chair; and poor Lady Redwood found that her husband's announcement of Mrs. Hobart's cold formality of address had not been overcharged. After two minute's silence, broken by a polite inquiry from Sir Alan after "his friend Hobart," the figure rose again, and rang the bell; when the footboy who had ushered them in having made his re-appearance and ducked his head to his silent mistress by means of a tug inflicted on the central lock of a shaggy red mane, she desired him to step to the vestry, and let the Doctor know Sir Alan and my Lady were there.

"You seem to have a very pretty garden?" said Lady Redwood, in a conciliating tone.

"The Doctor is fond of flowers, and takes pleasure in cultivating it."

"It strikes me that the finest flowers are generally to be found in old-fashioned gardens. Do you not think that stocks, and cabbage-roses, and honey-suckles are generally far more beautiful in old farm-houses than in the choicest nursery grounds?"

Mrs. Hobart was affronted. "The Doctor gets his plants and seeds from the first florist in the county."

"I saw you, Mrs. Hobart, at a distance, when we drove into the village," said Sir Alan. "I conclude you were frightened in by the overclouding of the weather?"

"The Doctor told me before he went out that it would not rain; so I was under no such apprehension."

"Hobart is, I know, an infallible weather-glass;" replied the patron; "thanks, I fear, to his rheumatism. Ah! here he comes!"

Lady Redwood's hopes that the entrée of the Vicar would serve to animate the scene, were very speedily undeceived. Mrs. Hobart, who was but the sympathetic reflection of a human being and destitute of an idea of her own, could no longer quote the Doctor when he was actually in presence; and as to Hobart himself, he was precisely the man to inflict martyrdom on poor Julia.

The Vicar of Farmington was an interpreter of minikin mysteries,—a prophet on a small scale,—a diamond edition of Albertus Magnus,—a duodecimo Roger Bacon,—a miniature Faust,—a nimini-pimini Galileo; dabbled in chemistry; passed for an antiquary with the maiden ladies of the neighbourhood;—was the proprietor of half a dozen black letter editions;—corresponded with the Gentleman's Magazine;—and, in the course of a second glass of negus, had been known to hint himself as the Philanthropos of the Statesman newspaper.—Generally speaking, an individual of this sort of universal genius, is a man of words; but Hobart was intrinsically and exclusively a man of letters. Suspicious perhaps (for the most arrogant pretenders have often a tolerable insight into their real value) that his sayings were of very small account in the ears of mankind, he strove to increase their importance—as the Dutch planters augment the price of their spices, by clearing the market with a

bonfire—by rendering them not only few and far between, but by giving utterance to his oracles in an unintelligible whisper. He would not inquire of one of his tithepaying farmers after the health of his cart-horse without taking him aside for so interesting an investigation;—was always to be found wispering in a window seat at the squirearchical dinners of the parish;—and shook his head with as much mysterious emphasis while bargaining in a corner for some old higgler's new laid eggs, as would have procured him considerable deference at a visitation dinner of the diocese.

But if so mysterious the course of his intercourse with the every day world, what was the extent of his empty solemnity in his communication with his patron!—In presence of Sir Alan, his aspect grew as hieroglyphical as the Pyramids;—his face was “a mystery” without being a “beauty;”—his discourse all periphrasis;—his “nods and winks” were pregnant with emphasis and implication; and as to his “wreathed smiles,” not a simper of them but contained a judicial verdict!—Not a word did the Doctor utter, but “denoted a foregone conclusion; his dissertations (without a key) were as incomprehensible as a fashionable novel; and his allusions to “certain persons,”—and “certain events,”—and “one who shall be nameless,” and “a mutual friend of ours whom it is needless to specify,” would have defied the exposition of Messieurs Boswell, Croker, or Thomas Hill.

His ko-tou to the bride reverentially but silently performed, Dr. Hobart commenced an inquiry, partly by signs and symbols, and partly by word of mouth, “whether Sir Alan had received his letter of the 21st instant, relative to an interesting occurrence;—and whether he might consider himself justified in the inferences he had formed on the occasion, relative to his patron's wishes on a certain head?”—

Redwood, albeit, well-used to the Vicar's tendency to monster his own nothings, and those of other people, could scarcely refrain from a smile as he proceeded to invest his reply to the question in the plain English of “Yes, my dear Doctor; and I have no doubt Lady Redwood will like green baize hassocks quite as well as red;” but Hobart was not to be defrauded of his opportunity. It might suit the proprietor of Farminghurst Castle to admit his “womankind” into the cabinet council; but the proprietor of Farmington Vicarage knew better. He was well aware by what means *he* had succeeded in enshrining himself as a divinity,—a Magnus Apollo,—a Socrates in a surplice,—in the eyes of his little

Dutch doll of a wife;—and had no mind to rend in her presence, the veil of his Temple of Mystery.

Laying violent hands on the button of the Baronet, he accordingly drew him into the furthest window,—placed him with his back to the ladies,—and left nothing visible to the anxious Julia but his own self-important face—creaming and mantling like the standing pool, and foreshowing the nature of a tragic volume.

What could they be talking about? What could the Doctor be saying to Sir Alan in that sympathizing tone, that deprecating whisper, which required the enforcement of so much shaking of his well-powdered head, so much wagging of his forefinger, so many furtive glances towards herself, to ascertain that she was not listening;—so many whispered but audible injunctions to the Baronet to speak lower;—to remember that they were not alone?—now and then, an italicized word reached her ears through the measured drone of Mr. Hobart's wishy-washy conversation; such as, "poor thing;"—"the feelings of a woman so circumstanced;"—"a voice addressing us from the grave;" and without the least suspecting that the mystery enveloped a communication from Hobart, as vicar, to Redwood, as magistrate, concerning a peccadillo of one of the female parishioners of the former, who was expiating the laxity of her morals on the treadmill upon six ounces of bread per diem, she referred every interjection, every sigh and every grimace, to some direful circumstance connected with his former patroness.

"I will step up to the Castle, and have a few minutes' private conversation with you on the subject," was the Doctor's concluding sentence, when Sir Alan, to the eminent peril of his button, at length tore himself from the window seat.

"Do, Doctor," said Redwood, enchanted to have procured even a short respite. "You will always find me open to your arguments;—but the less I hear on this painful subject the better. *It is now too late.*"

"*Too late!*"—Poor Julia.

The visit was soon at end; but not so the increased and increasing distress arising to Lady Redwood from Dr. Hobart's diplomatic tone and impressive pantomime. Although Sir Alan was keenly alive to his Vicar's foible, he respected him too much as a good man to hold him up to ridicule for not being a wise one; and instead of pointing out to Julia, or even admitting that he had not a grain of confidence in Dr

Hobart, nor the slightest inclination for the numberless private audiences insisted on by that worthy divine, he considered it his duty to maintain the importance of the Vicar of Farmington, in the eyes of his household, by indulging those little innocent vagaries of his self-importance which did no harm to either of them. Whenever the man of mystery visited the Castle, Sir Alan either withdrew with him to the library, or talked with him in mysterious whispers at the furthest extremity of the room; and it was really no great stretch of Lady Redwood's morbid sensibility to believe that weighty business was transacted between them, in which she was not suffered to participate; that they had a secret in common of painful import and unequalled interest. Sometimes the name of Walpole transpired amid their whispers; and though it arose only from Dr. Hobart's inquiry after the old lady's rheumatism when she last wrote, Julia no longer doubted that the gentleman in black was in collusion with that dreadful family; and that, in all probability, he transmitted to Weymouth a regular diary of the proceedings at the Castle. And this was the individual with whom a large fraction of her country life would be passed:—this was the man who was to dine with her every Saturday,—exhort her every Sunday,—regulate her beneficence to the poor,—and her intercourse with those whose young ideas were being taught to shoot at her cost and care! Dr. and Mrs. Hobart, and a husband whose heart was wedded to the grave, were the companions destined to replace her doating parents, her discriminating friend Miss Wilmot. She almost longed to be back again on the once familiar gravel-walk at Trevelyan Park. Nay, she would have swallowed the bitterest concoction devised by the malice of Buchan, only to feel her father's hand laid in benediction on her head, or her mother's clasped in yet tenderer endearment within her own!—

CHAPTER IX.

A goodly spot,
 With lawns, and beds of flowers, and shades
 Of trellice-work in long arcades,
 And cirque and crescent, framed by wall
 Of close-clipt foilage, green and tall,
 Converging walks and fountains gay,
 And terraces in trim array.

WORDSWORTH.

It is very well for philosophers, who dry up their tears with the dust of mouldy libraries, to affect superiority to the ordinary vexations of life. But of what but petty cares and petty pleasures, is the grand sum total of destiny composed? Heroes and heroines bear a small proportion to the mighty multitude of their fellow-creatures; and for one individual who perishes by the Brobdignagian sabre-cut, a thousand are exposed to Lilliputian warfare; *ten* thousand doomed to the pin's-prick martyrdom of trivial afflictions.

Lady Redwood had youth, beauty, virtue, fortune—was blest in affectionate parents and a husband of her own selection. But it was clear that she was fated to be a miserable woman: a single clear petrifying drop was incessantly dripping upon her head and chilling her to stone. The beautiful park of Farminghurst attracted day by day a host of admiring visitors to expatiate on the majesty of its woods, the variety of its prospects; but to the eye of the fair creature to whom they were as the dryad-haunt of daily life, they said nothing,—less than nothing:—her fancy was disenchanted,—the blight of disappointment was already on her young heart!—Without sister or brother or congenial spirit to exhaust the early impulses of her warm affections,—without romantic associations or romantic studies to exalt

her imagination or bewilder her passions—Julia Trevelyan's feelings had flowed undeviatingly in the pure channel marked out by nature. She had loved her tiresome father and mother dutifully and patiently ;—she had prepared herself to love her highly-gifted husband passionately and exclusively.—Was he not her chosen one, her own,—her only ;—the companion of her mortal pilgrimage,—the partner of its crowning immortality.

By how many chilling negatives were these and similar questions to be frozen into silence !—No ! he was *not* hers ;—never, never could be hers.—He belonged to his dead wife !—his living child,—to the whole tribe of Walpole,—to any and every one but *her* ;—to the mysterious vicar,—the importunate bailiff,—to stewards, tenants, gamekeepers, and constables ? Every human being at Farminghurst seemed to have a claim on his time, a title to his personal interest. Did he accompany his bride in a morning ride, every farmer who approached had his private tale to disclose, his petitions to advance to his landlord, regardless of the value placed by the repining Julia on every word proceeding from Redwood's lips, every glance emanating from Redwood's eyes. Did she persuade him, on their return, to adjourn with her to the library, and lavish the delightful hour of leisure preceding the dinner-bell on new books, old engravings, or passages from a favourite author shared in common,—the mysterious vicar was sure to drop in, with a face as secret as a despatch box, to draw his patron to a distant window, and engage him in discourse, in which Sir Alan's air of absorbed attention plainly denoted his interest. In a moment he seemed to forget *her* presence, and to become indifferent to *her* embarrassment. Nay she could not so much as reckon on an unmolested stroll with him through the beautiful shrubberies. Every minute the head gardener was at their side,—imploring instructions, demonstrating impossibilities, and courting praise from his master ;—while Julia, instead of rewarding him with her approval, fairly wished him at the bottom of one of his much vaunted melon pits.

Now had Lady Redwood been assured of possessing her husband's entire affection,—had she felt satisfied that, confer with whom he would,—debate with whom he must,—*she* was the one sole object to which inclination would have directed his time and thoughts,—vicar, steward, bailiff, butler, down to the game-keeper's crop-eared terrier, might

have shared his attention without exciting her uneasiness. She would have entered into all his solitudes,—all his pursuits;—nor envied a single whisper, nor been jealous of a single *ex parte* audience. But a woman whose mind is perplexed by doubts of her husband's attachment, sees mischief in every thing. She persuaded herself indeed that a husband of but two months standing, ought to feel as impatient as herself of Dr. Hobart's importunities,—as indifferent as her own heart to the fall of his timber and the rise of his underwood. If the vulgar cares of life were thus early to break in upon their intercourse, where was that blessed, that uninterrupted communion of wedded hearts, for which so many well-rhymed stanzas had bespoken her admiration;—on which “so much metre and much pains” have been from time immemorial thrown away. Oh! those poetical dreams of her youth!—those visions of the starry sky, the flowery vallies, and the quiet woods, enjoyed in sympathizing loneliness with the man of her heart,—of her choice,—her better, her far more precious self! Was all to end in colloquies with the game-keeper about breaking a litter of setter-puppies,—or with a Scotch gardener about the best mode of cultivating the hundred-headed cabbage?—Here was an end for her romance;—here a commencement of the commonplace realities of life!—Was it worth while to lavish the pure incense of her heart, that

Rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes,

on one who cared more for the mash about to be administered to his favourite mare, than for a walk with *her* by moonlight on the terrace?—and who preferred a debate with the Doctor touching the new tiling of the workhouse, to her own quotations from Byron and Mrs. Hemans? The thing was only too apparent!—Nothing but a heart whose energies were destroyed,—a mind whose polish was worn off by devotion to one pre-engrossing object, could be capable of such trifling, such paltry, such mercenary worldliness!—

It had been well for a woman thus misguided, to have been united with a husband stationed somewhat higher, or somewhat lower, in the scale of human dignities; with one who possessed no delegates to require his superintendence, or a dignity too supreme to admit of contact with them. He was just planted on that round of fortune's ladder best calculated to add to the amount of her cares.

People who brood over their sorrows, are usually success-

ful in hatching a numerous covey ; and those who sit " nursing their rage to keep it warm," are sure of a comfortable temperature of indignation. Solitary meditation did but distort the medium through which Sir Alan Redwood's conduct was viewed by his wife ; and at length, after a dialogue with herself of which the arguments were only too unanimous, she took a sudden resolution, about as discreet and judicious as all *sudden* resolutions of ladies of twenty-one, whether wives or maidens. " I will repress this glowing tenderness," said she. " I will meet his coldness with coldness. Since he can interest himself with trifles, let *me* seek objects of interest equally trivial ; since *his* pursuits are of so absorbing a nature, let *me* create to myself amusement from a thousand neglected sources. I will resume my drawing, my etching, —all the occupations which afforded me so much gratification ere I became acquainted with Redwood. *He* gives his attention to the plantations and orchards, —*I* will busy myself in improving the flower garden ; —*he* puts his exclusive confidence in Dr. Hobart, *I* will make a friend (a friend !) of the Vicar's wife."

Of these intentions, the second was at once the easiest and pleasantest of execution. It possessed even the charm of novelty ; for notwithstanding Julia's rustic education and feminine passion for flowers, gardening was among Mr. Trevelyan's numerous interdictions, as a source of catarrhs and an enemy to the complexion. In her own old home, Julia had possessed a little square ugly nook called *her* garden ; duly dug and planted by the under gardener, and weeded by seven ragged boys from the park lodge. But she had never yet enjoyed the glorious privilege of planting, uprooting, —raising the rustic temple, —and destroying the obsolete grotto.

Now the gardens at Farminghurst were certainly as well calculated for improvement as Repton himself could have desired. There was a labyrinth of brick walls and lofty terraces, with balustrades and vases of stone ; —a pleasure-stuck with statues and yew-trees ; and a Dutch garden, of which the sun-dial in the centre stood towering above the tulip and polyanthus beds, and vying in solitary grandeur with the column in the Place Vendome. All was surpassingly frightful ; and as the genius of harmony was not likely to descend and whisper to its mistress that the whole was in curious and remarkable unison with the heavy gables and sixteenth century architecture of the castle, there seemed

every probability that not so much as a pebble or a chrysanthemum would be left to prate of the whereabouts of its straight parterres and straighter gravel walks. But Julia had not sufficient ardour to become a ruthless invader; and instead of directing the force of her genius or of her authority to the demolition of the terraces and tulip-beds, she determined to choose a spot for her exertions where what was already charming might be rendered still more delightful.

Situated about half a mile from the house in one of the plantations (a rich shrubbery of evergreens leading from the old-fashioned pleasaunce to the ridge of hills forming the first landbreak towards the sea)—there was a beautiful platform of greensward fronting the western sun, and fenced round with an extensive belt of flowering shrubs. The spot was evidently not a favourite with its master; for whenever the course of their walks led them that way, he proposed returning to the house. Nay, once upon Julia's proposing that they should rest themselves there on a rustic seat placed under shelter of a spreading magnolia tree, he had frankly invited her to select some more cheerful spot. "Any part of the grounds rather than this," said he; leading her onwards through the closer dingles of the shrubberies.

This, therefore, was the place that naturally pointed itself out to Lady Redwood as propitious to her operations. Here she might work in secret, secure from her husband's observation; here she might create for herself an interest, an occupation, a solitary haunt for her reveries,—a refuge from her desolation. It was an excellent field for the exercise of her taste;—sylvan, remote, grassy, shadowy;—with several fine cedars feathering down to the soft short turf; and dense masses of evergreen, that wanted only a skilful hand to break into picturesque groups. Nothing could be easier than to open a vista towards the sea, and add a beautiful landscape to the tranquil lonely stillness of the foreground. It was only to cut through the screen of shrubs, and the rustic pavilion (the *shâlet*, for the erection of which her plans were already sketched) would command a magnificent prospect over the German Ocean!—Eager as a child for the realization of her scheme, the axe was soon at work; and in the course of a few days, the trunks of hemlock firs, stone pines, acacias, and tulip trees, which twenty years had coaxed into moderate growth, nay, even the beautiful magnolia tree,—lay encumbering the lawn. Instead of their dull dim foliage, a beautiful glimmer of the distant sea, with the lifelike variety of its

chasing sails and changeful hues, gladdened the eyes of the delighted Julia!—Having caused the rustic bench, originally placed under shade of the branching magnolia, to be disencumbered of the withering shrubs scattered around, and stationed on the spot she had selected for the site of the chalet, Lady Redwood sat herself contentedly down to contemplate the beautiful landscape she seemed to have called into existence.

There is something peculiarly pleasing in the combination of movement and stillness inherent in every extensive prospect. The lofty platform, perched like a green nest on the edge of the hill, commanded a beautiful stretch of woodlands shelving to the sea. A thriving village stood on a detached acclivity to the eastward; the very movement of whose windmill with the measured swirl of its sails, served to animate the scene. The soft, nobly rounded tops of the oak trees below, formed a rich foreground; and at a distance (its dolphin like tints varying with the reflection of the clouds sailing above) shone the majestic ocean,—the mightiest moving impulse of the created earth.

It was a lovely scene,—a soothing spot. The humming of the insects among the branches, the distant call of the herd-boys gathering their cattle in the pastures, and now and then a blackbird waking up the mellow gurgle of its evening song, alone disturbed the deep tranquillity;—and as Julia sat drinking in the balmy breath of evening, rich with the fragrance of the crushed grass and the aromatic exhalations of the pine trees, her heart felt freshened and her spirits brightened. She seemed to rise superior to the petty cares by which she had suffered herself to become oppressed;—to rejoice in the beauty of the external frame of nature;—to recognize the beneficence of the mighty hand that spreads its gifts so bounteously around us, and still hovers over its works as if awaiting fresh occasion to beautify and bless!—She began to recognise with thankfulness the prosperity of her own situation. Her parents too would shortly arrive in England,—would soon be with her;—would sit with her on that very spot;—and rejoice with her in the brightness of her destiny. Yes;—she felt that she was now happy, or on the point of becoming so;—that she should soon be as light-hearted as ever,—recover her spirits, her bloom, her—
Alas! what sudden spectacle caused the quick blood to mount into her cheeks; and suspended this happy progress

of thought and feeling?—What did she behold,—what hear—what apprehend,—to induce that air of consternation?—

Never before had the approach of her husband produced so strange an emotion! A rustling of the bushes having caused her to turn her head while summing up her vast amount of means of happiness, she was struck by the sight of Sir Alan standing motionless by her side; his looks haggard,—his lips quivering,—his eyes sparkling with indignation!—

“*Who* has done this?”—cried Redwood, pointing to the uprooted trees, and disordered turf. “What accursed hand has dared to invade this sacred—sacred spot!—Rather had my right arm been cut off, than one branch of yonder magnolia touched; rather had they taken my heart’s blood, than presumed to lay their finger on a single blade of grass. It was hers!—Mary,—Mary,—*is* this the way in which I have kept my promise;—*is* this the guardianship I have exercised over your favourite haunt!”—He wrung his hands distractedly as he spoke, with many an abhorrent glance over the scene of devastation.

But Julia was now beyond reach of his adjurations. She could no longer hear his cruel words,—no longer tremble under the terrible expression of his countenance—she lay cold and senseless at his feet.

CHAPTER XI.

What tho' his other wife
 Out of her most abundant soberness,
 Forc'd him to blow as high as she, dos't follow
 He must renew that long-since buried tempest
 With this soft maid ?

THE TAMER TAMED.

It was scarcely a week after this distressing occurrence, that Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan arrived suddenly at the Castle. Loving their only child so tenderly, and with so sure a trust in her reciprocation of affection, they had taken it into their heads to make their appearance without previous announcement, in order to give her what they called an agreeable surprise. Clearer-sighted people would have been aware that surprises (excepting in a pantomime) are never agreeable. Lady Redwood, who knew not of their arrival in England and believed them still in Paris, was very ill prepared to afford the welcome they expected. Recent indisposition imparted languor to her address and listlessness to her air ; and there was no longer a single impulse of joy stirring in her bosom.

Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan had expected indeed to see her weep in the joy of seeing them again—had expected to weep themselves :—they were prepared for a general overflow of tears. But they did *not* expect the flood to be of long duration. Satisfied that the sunshine of Julia's sweet smiles would very soon re-irradiate the scene, the lively tones of her voice would again yield delight and gladness to their old hearts.

But they were disappointed ! Lady Redwood, after the first burst of surprise and emotion, regained the statue-like paleness and immobility which were now becoming habitual to her. The tears dried in her eyes, but it was only to be

succeeded by the glassy vacant stare of a half-alienated mind. The shriek of her amazement was momentary; but, instead of giving place to joyful tender expressions of welcome, a hoarse broken murmur seemed to have usurped her former sweet intonation. Fortunately Sir Alan was absent—gone to fulfil his magisterial duties in the neighbouring town; or he would certainly have been apt to take offence at the involuntary exclamations of pity and regret with which the wondering parents contemplated their altered child;—the mortification expressed by old Trevelyan, that he had ever suffered her to encounter the searching atmosphere of Yorkshire, instead of her own soft breezes of the west;—and the hints thrown out by the poor mother, that her child was less happy and less cared-for than she expected to be!—On Julia's ear these insinuations fell innocuous. It was not what the world thought, it was not even what her parents thought, in disparagement of her condition, that constituted its shame or sorrow;—it was that, according to the pathetic phrase of the Boothby monument, "she had ventured her store of happiness in one frail bark, and that the wreck was total!" It had been her sole wish, her hope, her trust, to triumph in the exclusive affection of her husband; and disappointed in that blessed aspiration, her after life was a blank.

"Tell me, Julia, my love," inquired her mother, trying to engage her in general conversation, as they sat together after dinner in the vast comfortless saloon (which Lady Redwood wanted courage or energy to render more modernizedly habitable,) "who presented you at the drawing-room?"—

"I did not go. The weather was oppressive; and Sir Alan was not particularly anxious on the subject."

"You must have been languid from debility to suffer so much from the heat. I hope, my love, you saw Sir Henry Halford?"—

"No, indeed, Papa! Redwood was of opinion that the bracing air of Farminghurst would restore me; and you see," she continued, faintly smiling, "that he has proved a true prophet."

"Never saw you looking worse in your life!" cried old Trevelyan. "I wish to goodness I had brought down some sulphate of quinine."

"And how did you like the Duchess of Wearmouth?" inquired his wife.

"I did not see her."

"Not introduce you to his aunt the Duchess!" cried Mrs. Trevelyan with indignation.

"We had very little time to pay visits."

"It was *her* business to visit *you* as a bride. And pray then, my dear Julia, which of the family *did* condescend to notice you when you were in town?"—

"The Walpoles came up for a day or two, to bring the little girl," said Lady R., blushing deeply.

"The Walpoles!—*they* are the relatives of the late Lady Redwood. It was to his *own* connexions Sir Alan *ought* to have introduced his wife."

"And *would*, had I desired it. But my chief object was to get into the country."

"Probably he has not even presented you with the family jewels!—Have you your diamonds yet, Julia?"—

"I fancy they are at the banker's. It would have been absurd, you know, to bring them down here, where we see so little company."

"But *why* see so little company?—Your neighbourhood is a very good one, and your honeymoon over, I conclude, by this time?"

"Yes,—*quite over!*" responded Julia, sighing deeply.

"Then why not comply with the customs of society, and receive *your* neighbours as they ought to be received in a house like this?"—

"We have had but little leisure since we came here," replied Lady Redwood, unwilling to admit the want of harmony between herself and her husband, which would have rendered the presence of strangers so embarrassing. "But Sir Alan was saying yesterday, that as soon as the Walpoles came down to assist me in doing the honours, we ought to send out our invitations."

"The Walpoles again?" cried the old lady. "What have the Walpoles to do with *your* proceedings? Surely, my dear Julia, the customs of Trevelyan Park have qualified you to preside over Farminghurst Castle, without the intervention of such people as the Walpoles?"—

"Sir Alan has a very high opinion of them."

"Which need not induce him to depreciate his wife. It is time that things were put on a different footing," said poor fussy Mrs. Trevelyan. "I shall take care that the claims of a child of mine——"

"My dear, dear mother! interrupted Lady Redwood,

clasping her arms round Mrs. Trevelyan, as she sat beside her on the sofa. "If you value my comfort, you will not interfere betwixt me and my husband. My happiness is just now hanging on a thread. Touch it with ever so delicate, so tender a hand, and it will snap asunder. You must not talk to Redwood of the Walpole family; you must not torment him about diamonds and drawing-rooms; you must not urge him into seeing more company at Farminghurst than suits his convenience. You must not; indeed you must not!—If you love me, you will promise to desist from all these things.—You *do* love me;—you *will* promise?"—

"My dear child," cried poor Mrs. Trevelyan visibly affected, "I was in hopes I should see and hear no more of these nervous tremors. You remind me, Julia, of those disagreeable moments at Rome, when you were still in doubt respecting Sir Alan's attachment."

"*Do* I remind you of those moments?" ejaculated Julia, withdrawing her arms. And she whispered to herself that even that period of suspense was preferable to her present certainty of his sentiments.

The old squire, meanwhile, having been absorbed in a deep reverie, fancied he had made a notable discovery. Ever ready to espy a physical cause for moral effects, it suddenly occurred to him that all his darling Julia's chilliness, paleness, and nervous emotions, were attributable to the prospect of a little heir to Farminghurst Castle; and, vexed that he had said any thing to embarrass her, he now cut short the course of his lady's catechism, and began to relate the adventures of their own journey from Italy, for the amusement of his daughter; laughing at all the dull jests of his own narrative, and fancying it was Julia who diverted; and dwelling with considerable emphasis on certain situations and incidents which he found highly interesting, but which fell unheeded on the vacant ear of poor Lady Redwood.

The old gentleman's illusion could not last forever; nor had he been twenty-four hours under the roof of his son-in-law, before a dispassionate review of his own and his wife's observations, conjectures, and apprehensions, aided by the hints and implications of Mrs. Trevelyan's maid, sufficed to convince him that his Julia was an unhappy woman—a neglected wife!

"What *shall* we do,—what *can* we do!" cried poor Mrs. Trevelyan, wringing her hands as she walked up and down her dressing-room, after a cabinet council with her husband.

"In spite of all our care and caution, that our precious child should fall into the hands of a brute!"

"We have no evidence entitling us to use so harsh a term."

"What!—when you hear that the poor dear girl has twice been found senseless in his arms?"

"She seems in a very weak state of health, poor dear;—perhaps she wants tonics."

"And what has reduced her to a weak state of health?—She was always well enough and happy enough at Trevelyan Park. She was even well and happy in Italy, when this heartless man first intruded himself into our society. But I doubt whether she will ever be well or happy again. Ah! my poor dear Julia!—little did she deserve to be visited with such a destiny!"

"Hush, my dear, hush!—You saw how anxious the poor child was that we should be cautious in meddling with her domestic affairs."

"And yet you affect to doubt that her husband is unkind! What but actual, positive, and most severe unkindness could terrify her to such a degree?—Ah, Mr. Trevelyan! the case is only too plain;—I am convinced he uses her like a dog."

"Well, don't convince *me* so, if you can help it; for were it once proved, he should die the death of one, if ever Providence put strength into a father's arm?—But what chance have we of obtaining her confidence?"

"Sir Alan will be here to-morrow. You must point out to him, without warning Julia of your intention, that her health requires a milder atmosphere; and ask his permission to take her back with us to Trevelyan Park."

"Will she ever find courage to second the proposal?"

"We must place the necessity of the case in so strong a point of view as to leave him no alternative."

"At worst, I can but end (where I would fain begin) with peremptory measures, for, by fair means or foul, Julia shall accompany us home to Cornwall, or my name is not Richard Trevelyan!"

There proved, however, no occasion for the threat. *Fair* means were perfectly successful, so far as regarded the accomplishment of the object; but so far as regarded the advancement of their daughter's welfare, the wisdom of Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan's tactics is much to be doubted. It was in Julia's presence they first proposed their project for the sanction of Sir Alan; who, having, in the first impulse of

his surprise, turned his eyes upon his wife, was satisfied from the sudden flush overspreading her cheeks, that the plan originated with herself; and refrained from all demonstration of either surprise or mortification, while by a cold but unconditional assent, he completed her own. Unprepared for the scheme projected by the officious zeal of her father and mother, she was still less so for the calmness with which her dear Redwood seemed to contemplate her absence; and ill as she was inclined for the measure, Julia was now too much piqued by his indifference to oppose any obstacle to the plan.

"The weather is just now very propitious for so long a journey," uttered by Sir Alan, by way of collateral inquiry into their intentions, sounded to his wife very like a hint that the sooner they were gone the better. Having hastened her preparation accordingly, she now began to express to Mrs. Trevelyan great anxiety for change of air—great desire to be at home again. She was sure she should be better in Cornwall; she should grow strong at Trevelyan Park;—it was so long since she had been *at home*."

This last trait was conclusive!—Sir Alan Redwood would have forgiven her any thing but the feeling that still pointed out her "home" as elsewhere than at Farminghurst. He refrained from expressing his desire to be the companion of her journey to the south;—he refrained from even fixing a period for seeing her again; and even expressed his request to hear of her safe arrival at Trevelyan Park in terms so cold and formal, that compliance had been ignominious.

Heartstricken—disappointed—despairing,—poor Julia had scarcely fortitude to bear her up with any show of cheerfulness through the few days that elapsed previous to her departure; but pride—the suggester of so many pernicious lessons—enabled her to at least disguise the feelings she could not subdue. While her bosom was throbbing with anguish, she managed to make her adieux to the mysterious Vicar as decisive as if she were on the point of quitting Farminghurst for ever; and to receive her husband's cold farewell, as lightly and unconcernedly as if she were only intent on a party of pleasure.

CHAPTER XII.

We shall write to you
 As time and our concernings shall importune,
 How it goes with us ; and do look to know
 What doth befall you here. So fare you well.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

HAD Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan been aware of the exact nature of the duty they undertook in removing their darling Julia from the protection of her barbarous husband, not even their tenderness would have adventured so arduous a task. But with their usual opacity of vision, they were deceived to the last moment ;—were persuaded that Lady Redwood's expressions of anxiety to quit Farminghurst were genuine, and that the wild merriment bursting at intervals from her lips, even on the very morning of departure, arose from a pleasurable excitement. They saw not—they heard not—they had not soul to know or dream, that it sprang from the bitterness of a deceived and breaking heart !

The flush upon her cheek, indeed, filled them with consternation. Regarding it as a hectic symptom, they were all eagerness to remove her from Yorkshire to the mild breezes of her natal atmosphere. But when (the portal past,—the last lodge—the last glen—the last wood of Farminghurst left behind and out of sight,) they saw their daughter sink heavily into the corner of the carriage, her hands crossed despairingly on her bosom, and the feverish glow of her cheek fading suddenly into the paleness of marble, Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan began to fancy that the state of her health was more perilous than they had imagined ; and that she would scarcely bear the fatigue of so long a journey. They now blamed themselves for the responsibility they had in-

curring in the eyes of Sir Alan Redwood ; and half resolved to dispatch a letter back to the Castle, requesting he would follow them as soon as possible to Trevelyan Park. Nothing but the apprehension of accelerating the progress of Julia's disorder by the agitation attendant on the unwelcome appearance of her tyrant, induced them to postpone this ill-judging determination.

Lady Redwood *did*, however, bear her journey without inconvenience; and the interest of revisiting the abode of her childhood *did*, for a single moment, disperse the mournful clouds gathered around her brows. But her heaviness of spirit came again only the more painfully for its momentary suspension. Nay, there was something in the unnatural isolation of her new position that seemed to strike her with double force, now that she found herself a wife—a *widow*—in the dwelling-place of her virgin years. It seemed as if she had cropped the flowers of her destiny ;—that nothing was left for her but its withering leaves, its bowed and faded stem ;—that Hope, the butterfly which once fluttered amid its perished blossoms was lying dead in the dust ; that the bee—that sanguine gatherer of its honey—had deserted a thing which now rendered back nothing but bitterness ;—that the rified sweets were gone—that the eternal winter was at hand!

If the Trevelyans had indulged the flattering illusion that change of air and scene would bring back health and strength to their feeble charge, they were quickly undeceived. From the moment she arrived at her old home (which rose before her eyes as a monument to her departed happiness) her step grew heavier—her breath shorter—her eye more languid—her pulse more fluttering.—The Cornish physicians, who had seen her depart three years before in all the bloom and elasticity of girlhood, shook their heads as they noted her parched lips and hollow eyes, and listened to the nervous huskiness of her voice. It happened that their visits were paid immediately after the daily arrival of the post, when the excitement of expecting a letter from Farminghurst and the subsequent disappointment of her expectations, filled her veins with fire and her nerves with irritation. Unable to account for the stir of pulse perceptible in her frame, they followed the course systematically pursued by persons accustomed to watch over English constitutions, and attributed the mischief they could not develop to the existence of latent consumption. Although the lungs, they admitted, were not

at present affected, they deprecated all exposure to atmospheric changes, and desired that their patient should be at once amused and kept quiet. The lungs!—with the heart so near, that they should remain blind, deaf, and insensible to its influence!—

Meanwhile Lady Redwood profited by the privilege of an invalid to write no letters and see no company. After the few formal lines in which she officially announced to Sir Alan, her “arrival at dear Trevelyan after a safe and delightful journey,” she resolutely refrained from addressing him. What indeed could she have said, debarred from reference to the one sacred subject uppermost in her mind?—Or how could she have addressed him on common place topics, while her whole soul was withered up by the shadow of the unsurmountable barrier existent between them?—

With respect to society, it had been her intention in accepting her parents’ invitation, to play her part of excellent dissembling to its utmost limit; to smile, talk, and apparently enjoy herself as she had been wont to do, among her early friends and connexions. But the first few days past at Trevelyan proved her incompetency to such exertions. The neighbouring squirearchy—who came thronging to the Park to welcome back their fellow squire and squires; and listen to wonderful tales of their Italian travels,—regarding Julia’s sojourn with her family as the visit of an only child to her adoring parents, tortured her with facetious references to her absent husband, inquiries respecting the probability of his arrival, and expressions of anxiety to make the acquaintance of a being so idolized and idolizing. It was impossible to court the continuance of these vexations; and entrenching herself accordingly in the decree of the physicians that she was to be kept quiet, she confined herself to two cheerful comfortable apartments connected with her own room; which, in contemplation of the future visits of Sir Alan and Lady Redwood to a home which must one day become their own, had been splendidly fitted up for her by the kindness of her father. The country neighbours were easily satisfied. Having been admitted to a sight of the great lady of Farminghurst Castle, they ascertained that she was by no means so pretty as when (as little Julia) she paced the gravel walk by Miss Wilmot’s side;—that she still wore a simple dress of white muslin;—and that she was by no means so well worth looking at and listening to as her more chatty and equally travelled mother. The reality of her indisposition

was too apparent to induce any suspicion of fine ladyism in her self-sought seclusion; and seeing her so languid, pale, and thin, they politely wished in their hearts that the first little Redwood might prove a son and heir.

Poor Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan were not, however, to be so deceived. The Squire, to whom his daughter's merest finger-ach had ever been as an attack of the plague, now saw death inscribed in her hollow brows and attenuated form. Did not the very physicians talk about consumption;—did not Julia, herself, though reluctantly, admit that she could neither eat nor sleep!—Her appetite was gone,—her powers of rest;—it was all too plain,—too terrible!—His only daughter—his darling daughter!—Poor Mr. Trevelyan shuddered while he whispered to his poor old wife that the spring would come again, and find them childless. “So young—so beautiful—to think that we should survive her,” he exclaimed, with outspread hands, as he attempted to subdue his irritation by pacing up and down Mrs. Trevelyan's dressing-room.

“No, no, no,—do not say so!” cried the poor mother, laying down her work and taking off her spectacles, as if to recall all her perceptive powers for a mental revisal of the case. “Camomile admits that, at present, the disease has no hold on the constitution. The dear creature suffers no pain,—breathes freely.

“But her pale face, her debility?”

“I sometimes think we have done wrong to call in the aid of physicians. I have never (thank Heaven, and thank you, my dear husband,) had occasion to see much of human affliction; but I cannot help fancying that a great part of her suffering is on the mind. That history of the ghost, which Sterling persists in, and which, I find, was the common talk of the country at Farminghurst, must have arisen from some nervous panic.”

“What say you to inviting Miss Wilmot here?—Perhaps Julia may have less reserve with her than us.”

“Miss Wilmot, indeed!” exclaimed Mrs. Trevelyan. “It would be hard indeed were my only child to shew more confidence in her governess than in her mother.”

“She may hesitate about alarming *you*.”

“True!” replied the old lady; and the *woman* having given vent to her little movement of pique, the *mother* readily consented to a proposal which, by any possibility, could prove advantageous to the beloved invalid. But unfortu-

nately, the friend of Lady Redwood's youth was absent on a distant tour; and still more unfortunately, a visitor arrived in her place, than whom the Fates could scarcely have provided a more pernicious substitute. Mr. Trevanion, whose estates lay on the western coast of Cornwall, having accidentally heard of his niece's indisposition, considered it his duty to come and remind her of the uncertainty of human life, and the insufficiency of human skill in repelling the progress of disease. His solemn face and doleful tones, combined with the fading hues of autumn and the dispiriting influence of the equinoctial weather, completed the charm. Lady Redwood soon began to fancy not only that she was dying, but dying of a broken heart. The more persuaded, however, she grew of the fact, the more she was bent on screening it from her unfortunate parents, and preventing rumours of her situation from reaching her husband. Having hinted to Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan that she was in correspondence with the Castle, they were very ready to desist from all further communication with a son-in-law, now the object of their detestation.

"When all is over," mused poor Julia, "when my end is approaching,—then let him come, and gaze upon the wreck of the wife he has sacrificed. Let him see me perish;—let my closing eyes but detect some expression of sympathy and pity in his own, and I shall die contented!"

But however contented she might wish to render her last moments, Uncle Travanion took care that her present ones should assume a less amiable character.

"And so, my dear," said he, having visited her dressing-room with a bundle of tracts under his arm, "I find by a letter from my wife, that the Walpoles have profited by your absence to take up their abode at Farminghurst?"

Julia pretended to turn a deaf ear. She was unwilling Mr. Trevanion should discover that he was the first to communicate the intelligence.

"Pray did Sir Alan inform you in his last letters that Miss Redwood was established under his roof?"—

"Miss Redwood?"—

"His little girl.—Martha Walpole is in correspondence with one of my wife's sisters (whom you drank tea with one evening at my house), and writes her word that at Sir Alan's wish she had conveyed her poor motherless little charge to Farminghurst; and installed her under the care of a regular

governess, able to supply the deficiencies of *your* inexperience. It seems the Walpoles have engaged to pass the winter there."

"Have they?—I rejoice to hear it. Sir Alan being detained there on business, I am glad to find he has secured a little cheerful society."

"Cheerful? the Walpoles cheerful society?—Well—well!—they are at least well-principled, right-thinking people, who will speedily counteract any little irregularities you may have introduced into the establishment. By the way, my dear Julia, I am sorry to find that their feelings have been very much hurt by the way in which you have set your face against every thing connected with the memory of poor Lady Redwood. I believe one of Mrs. Walpole's chief objects in taking up her abode at Farminghurst is to put an end to the reports you have circulated of the house being haunted."

"I—I circulate such a report!"—exclaimed his niece; "I, who, with the exception of a few formal visits, have had no communication with his Yorkshire neighbours. The house haunted?—What an absurdity!"—

"I am glad to hear you say so." Mrs. Trevanion informs me an opinion is prevalent that you have quitted your husband's protection in consequence of seeing, or fancying, or stating that you saw, the apparition of the deceased Lady Redwood."

"Can it be possible," exclaimed poor Julia, "that so absurd a report has been promulgated in consequence of my having been startled by the sudden entrance of Sir Alan into my dressing-room, when over-fatigued by a long journey?"

"It seems too that your coldness has given great offence to a worthy family in the village, who always lived on terms of affectionate intimacy with your predecessor;—that you never so much as suffered poor Dr. Hobart to have a five minutes interview with your husband."

Poor Lady Redwood, recollecting only too well that the Vicar's shortest sentence was of that duration, and his shortest visit one hundred times as long, groaned aloud.

"In short, my dear niece, I own it affords me considerable mortification to find that in the brief space of four months of married life, your conduct has alienated the affections of your husband, disgusted his whole family, his whole county,—driven the poor from his gates, his child from his protection, and thrown you back upon the hands of your father and mother;—to say nothing of the vexation Mrs. Trevanion and

MYSELF EXCEPTED. IN IDENTIFYING THE DENIED AS A COOL-HEARTED REASON, YOUR WOUNDS: AND BEHIND, IN RESPECT THE IDLE HEARTS AND WILL THE HEART BEEN SO EXHAUSTED BY MY DEAREST AND DEAREST."

"THIS IS TOO MUCH—SO MUCH!" cried poor Julia, bursting into tears; "MY CONSCIENCE—MY HONOUR,—MY VERY FEELINGS MISREPRESENTED. ON THAT I HAD NEVER FORMED THIS MISERABLE CONNECTION, THE ORIGIN OF SO MUCH SUFFERING—SO MUCH HUMILIATION."

"My love, it was a thing of your own doing. I find that your parents would never have consented to the match, but for the obstinacy with which your heart was set upon it; and you remember that even I, your uncle, considered it my duty to set before you in the clearest light the hazards of the step you were taking."

But Lady Redwood remembered nothing, heard nothing, saw nothing. The idea that Sir Alan, not content with banishing her from his heart had circulated calumnies respecting her, absorbed her every faculty, her every feeling. She longed for Mr. Trevanion's departure that she might sit down and give vent to the wounded feelings so long repressed. Away with all reserve!—She had done wrong in so long remaining silent!—Henceforward she would at least express her sense of the injuries, the mortifications to which she was subjected. It is an easier thing to write than to give utterance to the effusions of wounded pride, of wounded affection. A pen obeying the dictates of an excited heart is always fluent—often eloquent; and within an hour of her uncle's departure to take his easy, jog-trot, morning's amble in the park, several pages of Julia's delicate penmanship expressed in the following lines the tumult of her gentle bosom.

CHAPTER XIII.

No language can express the smallest part
 Of what I feel, and suffer in my heart
 For you, whom best I love and value most.
 But to your service I bequeath my ghost,
 Which from this mortal body when untied,
 Unseen, unheard, shall hover by your side;
 Nor fright you waking, nor your sleep offend,
 But wait officious and your steps attend.

PALEMON AND ARCITE.

"Trevelyan Park:

"I have been greatly to blame! I ought not to have quitted your roof without a frank avowal of the bitterness of feeling instigating my return to that happy home of my childhood, which I would to Heaven I had never quitted. But I did not dream that the delicacy or timidity which sealed my lips, would expose me to the aspersions by which I find my character injured in the estimation of the world. I trusted that you, my lawful, my chosen protector, would be the last to assign to the gossip of society the unwarrantable judgment you have formed of my disposition. What have I done to deserve all this?—You found me happy, and conducing to the happiness of others,—the idolized child of doating parents. You saw (for how impossible was concealment to a heart unpractised as mine!) with what rash confidence I deposited every chance of future peace in your hands;—that my whole soul was absorbed in your affection;—that with you 'either I must live or have no life.'

"Why did you accept such a deposit!—Why foster and sanction a warmth of attachment which you knew was lavished in vain? You,—wedded to the grave,—engrossed by

remembrances of a tenderness as fond as that you discerned in my bosom towards yourself,—how could you venture, in the calmness of your deliberation, to chain me for life to the coldness of the sepulchre?—I am raving! I no longer know what I say or write! Stung to the heart by your ingratitude, I am careless of giving offence. What avails a momentary pang inflicted on your self-love, compared with the gnawing anguish to which, for three months past, you have condemned me?

“But no matter. I write in haste, but with as much firmness as a year’s deliberation could procure.—Let us part!—Do not cheat the world by a semblance of harmony which exists no longer! which, alas! never existed. You have done your work in traducing me by accusations of hard-heartedness—of selfishness; even I, who would have sacrificed every wish, every inclination for your slightest token of approval. Afford me at least, by sanctioning my residence with my parents, the means of vindication; that, during the short remnant of my days, I may strive to knit anew the happy interests of my youth, nor subject myself to fresh charges of rebellion and disobedience. Enjoy yourself in the society of those to whom you should never have given a rival in your—(I was about to say your affections—but when were they ever mine?)—your household and authority. You will soon be disencumbered of even the shadow of restraint. But when you learn my death,—do not, on peril of consigning another victim to an early grave,—do not again venture to take to your bosom a trusting, doating, miserable being; who, once undeceived, may like myself dash away the remnant of life as a vain and valueless possession. Farewell! I will not trust myself to say more. I will not expose the anguish of a devoted heart to the curiosity of those around you. I wait but your reply to prepare my father for a measure that will give liberty to you, and peace to me.”

Little did the affectionate parent of Lady Redwood conjecture, when he performed his quotidian duty of transferring the correspondence of Trevelyan Park from the letter-box to the post-bag, that the weighty epistle, double,—treble,—quadruple,—addressed in Julia’s hand-writing to her lord and master, was so big with important matter. Still less did Trevanion, when he took his seat at the dinner table, to acquaint his brother-in-law with the result of his morning’s observations—the dilapidated state of his fences, the meagreness of his flocks and herds, and the ruinous condition of

his plantations,—conjecture that his jeremiads of the morning had produced so remarkable an effect on the mind of Lady Redwood.

The little party humdrummed through their two courses,—aided by pretty nearly the same observations that had fallen from each on the same spot the preceding day; lamenting that dear Julia should confine herself to her own room; and concluded with a declaration that perhaps, after all, quiet was the best thing for her. Every thing went on as usual. The doors opened and shut the same number of times; and Mr. Trevelyan uttered his accustomed exhortation to the butler to let the fire be looked to before the servants left the room. Who would have guessed that the only daughter of the house was pacing her apartment above, in indescribable agitation of feeling; her overcharged heart bursting with the excitement of her recent effort, her burning eyes unmoistened by tears, her flushed cheeks glowing with indignation. Could Camomile have peeped in upon her proceedings, it is probable that he might have added a straight-waistcoat to the rest of his useful suggestions.

And all this perturbation was to last for a week!—Six long days must elapse previous to the arrival of the answer which would unseal the lips and seal the destinies of Lady Redwood. Six long days,—six long nights!—Could human patience, could human strength, support her through a continuance of such a conflict; and enable her to bear up against the well-meaning fussiness of her father and mother. It was at least some comfort that Mr. Trevanion would not be present at the crisis; that he would be gone back to prognosticate evil to his own wife, previous to the announcement of her separation from her own husband. Already she counted the hours till the fatal day. The post came in early; she should have the day before her to communicate the astounding fact to her father and mother; the preceding night to strengthen her spirit with quietness.—But alas the best digested plans are the sport of time and chance. Instead of supporting the conflict for one hundred and forty-four hours, the delicate frame of Lady Redwood sank on the second day of trial. A nervous fever manifested itself; Camomile was sent for; his patient grew delirious, and the squire and squiress distracted. Long before the arrival of the Thursday which was to bring the fatal fiat from Farminghurst, an express was on its way thither to acquaint the heard-hearted Baronet that he might spare himself the discredit of negative or affirmative;—that

the King of Terrors was about to take under his protection the fair flower withered by the biting blasts of his indifference.

Fortunately the letter in which Mr. Trevelyan hastily and harshly set forth both the evil and its origin, never reached the hand of Sir Alan Redwood. He had already quitted home. The appeal—the affecting appeal of his wife had instantly determined him to set forth and plead his cause in person; explain all that was mysterious in his own conduct,—and soothe away all that had been painful to herself. Never was there a man so overwhelmed with surprise as Julia's husband by the sudden avowal of her feelings,—her unlooked-for, her undreamed of feelings. So persuaded as he had been of her coldness,—her worldliness,—her egotism, it seemed, on the perusal of her letter, as if a mine of unappreciable wealth were opening at his feet; and all his visions on the eve of realization. She *had* loved him then;—she *had* been willing to become a mother to his child,—a ministering angel to his destinies. *His* reserve had been the cause of all their misunderstanding—*her* jealousy the origin of all her melancholy! How soon, how readily could all be explained;—how delightful the meeting after so inauspicious a farewell!—He had been on the point of losing his Julia; she had been on the eve of deserting him for ever; but it was not too late!

Oh! for a horse with wings!—

To bear him on his back to

Trevelyan Park. Oh! for an advent of Nat. Lee's divinities; those

Gods, who annihilated time and space,
To make two lovers happy.

In a few hours he was in his travelling carriage,—on his road to Cornwall,—on his road to Julia; the Julia of the Ludovisian gardens and Horatian Villa. No longer the moping wayward Lady Redwood; but the Miss Trevelyan who had wept on his bosom while uttering her avowals of love—her promises of faith. It is seldom that the leafless hedges and swampy roads of a November journey appear so charming in the eyes of man, as they seemed to the Baronet, while traversing the cross roads and miry ways dividing the northern extremity of Yorkshire from the southern extremity of Cornwall. Scarcely stopping to eat and never to sleep, on his route, it was midnight when he arrived within ten miles of Trevelyan Park. What was to be done? Sir Alan

dreaded interfering with the routine of the squire's establishment, or provoking the comments of the family by making his appearance in the middle of the night; and half determined to remain at the inn so as to reach the hall by breakfast time on the following morning. Already he had reached the court-yard, when this project occurred to him; where, to his surprise, the landlord having approached and flared a candle in his face, uttered an exclamation of disappointment.

"What is the matter?"—cried he, preparing to alight.

"Beg pardon, sir!" replied the man, apprehensive of having displeased a gentlemam in a new chariot and four. "Hope no offence. Took you for the doctor from Truro.—Squire Trevelyan's groom's been waiting for him here these three hours.—Fancy he'll be too late.—You're a stranger in these parts I take it, or you'd understand that gentle and simple—"

"Who is ill at Trevelyan Park?" inquired Sir Alan in a faint voice, falling back in his carriage. "The old lady—the—the—"

"*Ill*, sir? Lor' bless you, sir,—I wish she *may* be ill at this present speaking. The squire's young man says as there was n't half an hour's life in her when he came away. They've been hunting all over the country for advice; but, as I said before, 'Lor' bless you, Dick!' says I, 'what signifies advice when the strength's gone?' She's been raving these three days; for all the bleeding in the world would n't keep down the fever, till she dropped all o' sudden like a spent ball; and now—"

"Mrs. Trevelyan is advanced in years," faltered Redwood, for he had not courage to hazard a direct inquiry.

"Mrs. Trevelyan!—Lor' bless you, sir; it be'n't Mrs. Trevelyan!—It be Squire's daughter, Miss Julia as was.—Married only a day or two back, as one may say; and sent back home to die. God love her, pretty lamb!—I lived bailiff in the family, and have known her ever since she was as high as my stick."

Poor Redwood heard no more. To the infinite consternation of the landlord of the Trevelyan Arms, he cut short his communication with, "Horses on, instantly!"—nor was it till he was some hundred yards advanced on the road, that the ex-vassal of the family became aware of all he hazarded by his abrupt and uncalled-for disclosures.

CHAPTER XIV.

Oh! if thou hast at length
 Discovered that my love is worth esteem,
 I ask no more, but let us hence together.
 And I—let me say so—may yet be happy.

SARDANAPALUS.

ALTHOUGH the legislation of Lady Redwood's sick room was at present consigned to the hands of four of the best-meaning and worst-judging persons in the world,—her father, mother, uncle, and apothecary,—they had just united sense enough among the party to prevent Sir Alan from rushing distractedly to her presence, and crushing the little hope remaining. The expected physician soon made his appearance; but he came only to confirm their worst apprehensions, and to declare that in the remote possibility of the patient's struggling through the attack, mental alienation could scarcely fail to be the result.

Even this was something. The poor old father and mother eagerly clung to the prospect of seeing their rescued child, led about in helpless imbecility, rather than surrender her to the grave; and as to her husband, he was too lost, too utterly self-abandoned, to calculate on possibilities. All he could do was to kneel by the sufferer's bedside,—listen to every breath, every murmur,—watching every change on her countenance; and, when the obscurity of the chamber permitted, supplying the attendance of those who ministered to her wants. He interposed indeed his authority, when on the first promise of returning reason Mr. Trevanion suggested the necessity of apprising her of her situation, and affording her spiritual preparation for the grave; and at length, on the appearance of a decided amendment, succeeded in prevailing

on her parents to retire to rest, and leave him in charge of a treasure which none knew better how to value.

Many days had elapsed since Julia had exhibited any degree of personal consciousness; but the deep sleep that now overpowered her faculties, afforded the promise of refreshment; and with anxiety mingled with hope Redwood bent over her,—listened to her light breathing,—and noticed that the fever was abating in its virulence. The sighs that escaped her bosom seemed to arise from some moral cause rather than from the oppression of disease: she was struggling back to life,—to the sense of her miseries. He even heard her breathe his name as if in the transports of a dream.

“No letter yet?”—she faltered, without unclosing her eyes. “Will not Redwood deign to write to me?”—

“Hush!” said he, in a low voice, apprehensive that she would injure herself by further agitation. “He is coming.”

“No, mother, no!—we must not meet again. He has broken my heart. Let me die in peace.” And again she sunk into lethargy, as if incapable of confronting the wretchedness of her condition. Towards morning she again betrayed symptoms of animation; again inquired for letters; again, and with the tenderest adjurations, breathed the name of her husband. Half concealed behind the draperies of her bed, trembling lest he should augment her perilous excitement, he no longer dared trust himself to reply. She was now sufficiently recovered to detect his voice; and summoning her accustomed attendants he stole away from her apartment.

It was no longer possible to doubt his influence over her feelings. Even had her letter left a shadow of mistrust upon his mind, the tones of endearment in which this being, hovering on the brink of the grave, pronounced his name and clung to every token of his early love, must have convinced the most obdurate heart. But he must yet refrain from explanation,—yet postpone that precious interview which, he flattered himself, would conduce more to her recovery than all the medicaments of the physicians.

“My dear sir,” said his friend Trevanion, drawing him aside as soon as Camomile and Company pronounced that they were beginning to entertain sanguine hopes in her behalf, “as your departure would no longer leave any peculiar responsibility on the hands of the family, I am sure you will pardon me for suggesting that it would be highly prejudicial

to my poor dear niece to find you an inmate of this house on her restoration to consciousness. It is a hint that could scarcely be given by Trevelyan and my sister, without incurring the charge of inhospitality; but at my years, and considering the terms of confidential regard on which we mutually are, I am sure I shall be forgiven for candidly owning that the prejudice poor dear Lady Redwood appears to have conceived against you—"

"Arises," cried Sir Alan, no longer able to repress his impatience, "from mutual misunderstanding. I came hither only in compliance with—" he paused;—he *could* not say with her invitation—"with Julia's wish for an interview."

"Well! my dear sir," replied Mr. Trevanion shaking his head. "I have candidly given you my opinion; to which I will only add, that should you persist in your determination, neither Camomile nor I will answer for Lady Redwood's life."

He did, however, persist. In the face of Mr. Trevanion's homilies, Mr. Trevelyan's prescriptions, and the indignant remonstrances of the lady mother, he resumed his post by Julia's bedside; and, after carefully concealing himself from her observation so long as her debility of frame rendered agitation dangerous, seized the first moment of returning strength to recall himself to her notice, to enfold her within his arms; implore pardon for all his past offences, real and imaginary; and re-cement his union with his wife by sweeter and bitterer tears than had ever yet been wept by either.

It was not, however, for many weeks,—(not till Lady Redwood was able to rise from her sick-bed, and nighed cozily in her arm-chair by the fireside, give ear to the explanation now so eagerly tendered by Sir Alan,)—that the following narrative sufficed to obliterate all traces of her jealousy, her repining, her ingratitude. It afforded no small subject of consternation to her father, when occasionally he intruded upon their *tête-à-tête* (in order to ascertain that the apartments were regulated to the thermometer temperature) to perceive that his darling Julia's eyes were often red with weeping, and her darling Redwood almost breathless with the interest of the conversation they were holding together.

"I need not remind you, dearest," said Sir Alan, while Julia averted her face lest she should betray an overweening interest in the narrative, "that it was in my earliest childhood I experienced the loss of both my parents. I never

knew them,—I never missed them,—but grew up in the family of my guardian, Mr. Walpole, as though it were my own. My school vacations were passed at his residence; all my pastimes, all my enjoyments, seemed to originate from thence; and if they were scanty and different from those accorded to my companions, the old gentleman dealt with me only as with his own children, with his wife, with his very self.

“These worthy but most unconciliating people belonged in short to that austere class of the rigidly righteous, of which the Trevanions have afforded you a modified specimen; persons who

Hope to merit Heaven by making earth a hell;

and are so much on their guard against the frailties of mortal nature, that they dare not even taste the cup of sweets vouchsafed by Providence, lest there should be poison in the lees! Mr. Walpole was a noble-spirited man; but hard, dry, self-opinionated; his wife, one of those magnifiers of nothingnesses who have always a microscope in their hands, to quote deformities in the fairest works of nature; and pry into causes where the effect alone concerns them.

“Martha, the eldest,—by very many years the eldest daughter,—exhibited a promising combination of the defects and deficiencies of both her parents: formal, pedantic, supercilious, with nothing human, nothing loveable in their nature. Bigoted in their religious principles, the creed of the Walpoles was of a selfish and repugnant kind; rebutting all human predilections,—all sublunary gratifications; yet imparting no charm to the state tendered in exchange for so many sacrifices. Towards myself, the demeanour of the family never went beyond a compassionating toleration.—They thought me, indeed, unlucky to have been born with so many temptations to criminality, as a considerable estate and family interest could not fail to supply;—in intellect a weakling;—in spiritual prospects a castaway. All their efforts (and they laboured diligently in their vocation) would scarcely, they feared, endue me with a becoming contempt of the world and its ways, but they did their best to preserve me from temptation, by carefully secluding me from communication with the heartless children of perdition.

“Under these circumstances, you will not wonder that I was induced to regard my playfellow, little Mary (the youngest of the family) as a being of a very superior order; for

although far from participating in the rampant willfulness of my own disposition, she was free from the hard presumptuous self-sufficiency, and pharisaical pride of her tribe. She was not pretty,—scarcely even good-looking? but by the side of Martha's gaunt figure, and the stern visages of the old people, her countenance grew pleasing and person graceful.—She was young, too; and amid the dull solemnities of the Walpole establishment, my eyes rested upon Mary as the only living thing with which I could sympathise; and almost as great a victim as myself. By the time I attained my nineteenth year, I fancied myself desperately in love with her; told her so;—implored her affection in return; and having mutually plighted our girl-and-boyish faith, formally requested the sanction of old Walpole.

“The world was of opinion that this attachment was exactly what he expected,—what the whole family had long been planning. Yet, Mr. Walpole insisted that we should meet no more till the attainment of my majority; and sent me abroad with a ‘serious’ tutor to put the strength of my passion and my principles to the proof. This again the world hailed as a hazardous experiment,—predicting that Mary Walpole's pale face and spiritless demeanour would do little in restricting the wild courses of a boy of nineteen; but had they known more of the monotonous and chilling interior of Mr. Walpole's family, they would have been aware that a person whose growth had grown and strength strengthened in its iron trammels, must have acquired a lethargy of docility not easily thrown off. It is absurd to describe the ardent spirit of youth, as ~~being~~ only the more impetuously for the restraints imposed upon its impulses; nothing is more readily checked than the vigor of the human heart. Moreover, mine was to be a tour of instruction rather than of amusement. The first year was to be passed at the University of Jena; and a considerable portion of the latter among those ‘Isles of Greece,’ which, although ‘burning Sappho’ may have loved and sung there in the olden time, present few modern beauties or modern blues to mislead the heart or mind of the youthful traveller. I had therefore but little temptation to swerve from my faith; and, on the whole, am inclined to think that absence did but increase the strength of my attachment;—for fancy or forgetfulness tended to beautify its object, while Mary's letters began to breathe a holy tenderness to which Mary's lips had failed in giving utterance. I returned home happy in the anti-

cipation of assuming the possession and control of my extensive property, and sharing it with my guardian's daughter ; unaware of the change which time had been silently working in my views and feelings.

"On re-entering Mr. Walpole's house, I became at once painfully sensible of the egotism dictating its narrow policy ;—of the insignificance of my guardian's character ; of the arbitrary opinionativeness of his wife ;—of Martha's cold-blooded reserve and supercilious self-esteem. They still professed to despise the world, and live to and for themselves ; while I, in peace and charity with all mankind, and perhaps too easily captivated by the specious blandishments that courted me in society, was eager to open my house—my heart—my mind—to all the world. No act of treachery had put me out of humour with human kind :—they spoke me fair,—and I doubted not meant me well."

"And Mary ?" whispered the anxious Lady Redwood, interrupting for the first time her husband's narration.

"I would willingly avoid imputing the shadow of blame to her," he resumed, in a more subdued tone. "But I must admit that Mary shared the condemnation which my amended experience brought down on every member of her family. She had gained nothing since we parted, and lost much. The freshness of early youth was gone, both from her countenance and character. If less frigid in demeanour than her elder sister, she had become reserved to a degree inconsistent with the fervour of love ; and in our private interviews, persisted in the same heartless formality necessitated by the presence of the family :—her notions of decorum were now so rigid, and her judgments so harsh, that I shuddered at the idea of passing my life with so precise and uncommunicative a person. But it was too late to recede. The Walpoles were bent on the early celebration of our nuptials ; and trained as I had been under their yoke, it appeared to me impossible to contravene their authority or set aside their judgment.

"The nearer, however, I drew to the moment which was to operate so decisively on my destiny, the more I clung to the attractive range of society now, for the first time, open to my participation. My engagements with Miss Walpole were not so generally known but that many a mother, many a daughter, laboured to embellish my existence with the charm of female favour. Courted, adulated, welcomed to hundreds of the gayest houses of the metropolis, it was only at my

guardian's that I was received with lowering brows and ceremonious coldness ;—that my actions were subjected to perpetual investigation, incessant blame, and my condition of life contemned as a source of empty show and worldly care. I longed to get Mary away from the influence of her friends. Since she must unavoidably become my wife, I resolved to do my utmost in modelling her to those graces which I was now beginning to prize so highly, or in rendering society sufficiently attractive to tempt her from the solitude which she knew not how to embellish. I loved music ;—and Mary was no musician. I was fond of poetry ;—and Mary had been taught to regard it as a frivolous and profane thing. In Italy, I had begun to study the language of Metastasio ;—and I found it qualified by the Walpoles as a vain and wanton dialect. I delighted in pictures ;—and my guardian persisted in defining them as a strip of canvas daubed with meretricious colours, at an infinite waste of time and pains to some individual who might have been usefully employed in mechanical labour. He seemed to pity me for being proprietor of so much superfluous brick and mortar as was wasted in my dwelling at Farminghurst ; and as to Burnley—what was the use of a second country-seat ?—I might either let it, or convert its useless lawns to agricultural purposes. All these narrow views of life and manners provoked not a single argument of opposition or remonstrance from Mary's lips ; and, on the eve of her marriage with the man of her choice, it seemed far more a matter of regret to her to quit her Dorcas societies and Sunday-schools, her weekly pensioners and favourite preacher, than a subject of joy that she was about to join her fate to mine, to be the ornament of my home, and the sharer of my joys and sorrows. How could I be satisfied with so limited, so contemptuous a measure of personal affection ?—How could I bear that a tie so momentous as that of conjugal faith should be regarded as secondary to the ordinary connexions of life ?—The more I saw of Lady Redwood's impassive coldness, the more I withdrew from her those diminishing impulses of tenderness, which required the genial atmosphere of sympathy to warm them into new and perfect growth ?

“ You, dearest Julia, may perhaps have been induced to inveigh against the dulness of the Castle. Judge what it was under the dominion of that frigid and paralyzing spirit of bigotry, which banished music, poetry, flowers, from its desolate apartments ; and rejected those still more cheering

influences of endearment and mirth, which brighten even the dreary resorts of penury ! Dispirited by her grave and oppressive taciturnity, I soon took refuge from my unattractive home in an affected ardour for field-sports ; profiting by the excuse thus afforded, to fill my house with my country-neighbours, or escape it altogether by prolonged visits to their own. Mary declined accompanying me ; and it was some relief to throw off, from time to time, the heavy yoke of dulness I had so madly affixed upon my own shoulders. The very name of home became loathsome to my feelings. No smiles awaited me on my return ;—no interest animated my pursuits :—I experienced the torment of the criminal of the olden time chained by Mezentius to a corpse. My irritation settled into coldness, and indifference was on the point of becoming aversion.

“ The autumn succeeding my inauspicious marriage, I agreed to join a shooting expedition to the Moors ; and on communicating to Lady Redwood the probability that I might be some weeks absent from home, I prepared myself for tokens of regret or displeasure. Mary contented herself, on the contrary, with a calm expression of satisfaction that I should be so long away ; requesting that she might be permitted to invite her own family to bear her company while I remained in Scotland.

“ ‘ My father will be well pleased to visit the Castle during your absence,’ she observed. ‘ Your views and opinions are so opposite, that no satisfaction or advantage can result from your being together.’

“ This declaration amounted to a tacit confession of her own discomfort in my society ; for no two persons could be more congenial than Walpole and his daughter, none more positively at variance than his daughter and her husband. Meanwhile, notwithstanding my efforts to get away previous to the arrival of my father-in-law, circumstances occurred to retard my departure ; and during the eight-and-forty hours we passed under the same roof, the breach between us was incalculably widened by his pertinacity in favouring me with the same lectures, dictations, and reprovals, to which I had been compelled to submit during my minority. Lady Redwood, if she did not chime in with his admonitions, preserved a dignified silence ; and never was there a sensation of release more gratifying than mine when, after a formal salutation from my wife, I turned my back upon Yorkshire, and felt respited for a time from my household tribulations.

"Nor did absence diminish the breach thus opened between us. My companions, a set of jovial bachelors who were tolerably aware of the unsatisfactory nature of my domestic connection, not only laboured to render me sensible to the joys of liberty, but were incessantly throwing out insinuations against petticoat government, and the odiousness of women of sour or shrewish disposition. But the cheerful life for which we were indebted to the proverbial hospitality of the Highlands, formed in my eyes the best commentary on Lady Redwood's churlish unsociability; and when the period arrived for returning to Farminghurst, I shuddered at the prospect of encountering the Walpole circle, with its querimonious tones, its severity of universal condemnation, its selfish reserve, and pragmatismal importance. I knew that all my thoughts, words, and deeds, were about to be sifted through the sieve of their peculiar doctrines;—that my pleasures would be treated as sinful, my pursuits as contemptible;—that even Mary was beginning to regard me as a law-breaker and a reprobate!

"Under these circumstances, it was a considerable relief when a plan was suggested that our party, instead of breaking up at the close of the grouse-season, should re-assemble at Melton Mowbray towards the end of October, for the formation of a private hunting establishment; and supported by so agreeable a project, I returned home, determined to defy guardian, mother-in-law, Martha, nay, even Lady Redwood herself; to assert my own authority, seek my own amusements, and leave her to the enjoyment of those so little consonant with the temper of a man in the prime of health and prosperity."

CHAPTER XV.

The silver shower, whose reckless burthen weighs
Too heavily upon the lily's head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root.

WORDSWORTH.

"My wife's family," resumed Sir Alan, after having paused to give audience to Julia's exclamations of wonder and condemnation, "were, however, too much enlightened as to the obstinacy of my disposition, to suggest opposition to my plans. No proposal was made on either side that Lady Redwood should bear me company. Her father was anxious that she should return home with him, and as Mary had now the prospect of becoming a mother, the project was eligible enough. But she would not hear of quitting Farminghurst; and succeeded in persuading the old people to permit her sister Martha to pass the winter in Yorkshire. My departure preceded theirs; so that I knew nothing of their state of feeling in taking leave of their widowed daughter—for such they already regarded her.

"I need not weary your patience, dearest, by a description of the heartless mirth and festivity in which I passed the winter. It was my sole study to obliterate from my memory every thing connected with Farminghurst;—and I succeeded. Already I regarded my marriage as an act of boyish infatuation; and was even base enough to concede to my intimate associates the privilege of rallying me respecting my methodistical wife and miserable home. One or two of my friends even urged me to bolder resistance; to re-model my establishment and mode of life according to my own good liking. 'If Lady Redwood does not choose to con-

form to her husband's wishes,' argued they, 'let her go home again, or pray and preach elsewhere. You have St. Paul's authority on your side to enforce her submission to your authority.'

"My opinions began to coincide with theirs; and already I determined that, after the event of Mary's confinement, a mutual explanation should place us on a different footing; that either she should consent to render my house the resort of cheerful society and conform her own habits to the usages of the world, or that we should form separate households after our several fancies. I insinuated something of the kind in one of my letters; but Mary's replies were so guarded and so cold, that it was impossible to judge whether the proposal was acceptable or painful to her feelings. She wrote regularly, giving me an account of all that interested or ought to interest me, concerning my tenantry and estates; but the tone of her correspondence partook of the dry circumstantiality of all letters of business.

"Never did I hail the approach of spring with so little satisfaction, as when a brighter verdure in the Leicestershire pastures reminded me that I should shortly have no further excuse for prolonging my absence. Lady Redwood's confinement was announced for the beginning of May; and at the end of March, I found my companions beginning to disperse. I took my leave of them with regret and envy. *They* were looking forward with eagerness to the season,—to their clubs, the Opera, the Derby, Almack's, and all the countless varieties of London pleasure; while *I* had nothing to anticipate but a sullen wife and discontented home. My utmost hope suggested that Mary's new position as a mother would tend to humanize her character, and warm her feelings towards myself; or that it would afford me an excuse for leaving her more than ever alone, and dispensing with the company of her odious relatives. On one point, moreover, I was positive; and expressed my determination so clearly in my letters, that even the coolness of Walpole blood was not proof against my authority. Of all the family, Martha had been the most audacious in her expressions of disapproval of my conduct; and not choosing to expose myself to discussions with her at so critical a moment as that of her sister's indisposition, I signified my wish that I might find Lady Redwood *alone* on my return to Farminghurst. This was ungracious enough;—but it was better than a family quarrel.

"I *did* accordingly find her alone; and not only more cheerless and dispirited than ever, but in a miserable state of health. But having neither sisters nor any near female relative of my own, I was little habituated to the peculiarities of feminine infirmity; and attributing the delicate appearance of my wife entirely to her situation, gave little heed to her illness. It did not render her kinder or more conciliating; and trusting that the birth of her child would restore her strength and soften her humour, I betook myself to my usual occupations,—riding over my farms with the bailiffs, making excursions in my yacht, and passing my evenings in the perusal of new works (certainly not selected by the Walpole dynasty) forwarded to me from town. It was inexplicable that, living together as we did, I could manage to see so little of my wife; or that she could persist in her cold and selfish alienation,—in cherishing so fixed a dislike to the father of her expected child.

"One day, about a fortnight after my return, I had been occupied the whole morning with the keepers shooting landrails upon the marshes of Farming Level—(you remember it, Julia?—the salt-marsh extending from the cliffs to the sea, at the foot of the shrubberies?)—and having dismissed my people, I took a short cut homewards through the grounds, followed by a favourite setter. It was a lovely day in April,—mild, balmy, full of promise, full of hope; the trees budding around, the birds singing among the branches as if to encourage their growth; every bank purple with violets, and an endless variety of spring flowers enlivening the borders of the shrubberies. The clear blue skies, the bluer sea, the woods just rousing from their winter lethargy, the very herbage under my feet announcing a more buoyant and life-like texture,—all tended to raise my spirits and brighten my views. As I sauntered along, watching the squirrels which Ponto's approach drove up the tall stems of the pine trees, I was forming a thousand projects for the future. I resolved that, on being assured of Lady Redwood's safety, I would visit London, perhaps Paris, and familiarize myself with the pleasures and diversions so fondly described by my Melton friends. Although deprived of my hopes of happiness, *amusement* at least was at my command; and I promised to repay myself the infinite arrears of enjoyment still owing by the Fates.

"Engrossed by these chimeras, I reached that platform of the shrubbery, that fatal spot—(Sir Alan looked signifi-

cantly at his wife; and Julia nodding her comprehension of his meaning, impatiently motioned to her husband to proceed,) to which you have since observed me affix a peculiar sentiment of interest; when, to my surprise, I perceived Lady Redwood seated on the bench under the magnolia tree. Weak as she was, it was a considerable walk for her to have achieved; and common courtesy required me to accost her, and offer my arm to facilitate her return; when, on approaching her, I perceived with surprise that her features were swollen and discoloured with weeping. Strange to say, I thought her prettier under that aspect than I had seen her since our marriage. She was more like the Mary of my youth.—Alas! it was so long since she had appeared to indulge in any womanly emotion.—

“What is the matter?” said I, in a kinder voice than usual, and seating myself by her side, ‘Have you received bad news from your family?’

“‘No.’

“‘Are you indisposed?—overfatigued?’

“‘Not more so than usual.’

“‘But you have been crying.—What has distressed you?’—

“‘I often cry without any new distress.’

“‘You are weeping even now?’

“‘Not for sorrow’s sake. Do not disturb yourself. My feelings are little worth investigation or comment.’

“My suspicions were excited by these inconclusive answers; and I now insisted on an explanation. I fancy I spoke harshly, for Mary’s tears flowed unrestrainedly.

“‘Nay then,’ cried she, at length, as if by an impulse beyond her own control; ‘why not vindicate myself by an avowal of the truth?—My lips will soon be closed forever, my heart frozen into peace. Why, why—scruple to reveal its burning anguish? Yes! I have been weeping—enjoying the consolation of tears—the only comfort you have left me! But they were tears of joy: for I know that the end of my pilgrimage is approaching, and that my heaviness shall not endure forever! Rejected as I am from your bosom—contemned—reviled—the day of my release is at hand; and I shall taste, after all my trials—my humiliation—my despair,—the tender mercies of a more forbearing Master.—Yes, Redwood, I am about to die. Rejoice with me!—rejoice for your own sake,—rejoice for mine!—Our ill-assorted marriage is on the eve of dissolution. You will be free to form

a tie more congenial with your feelings; and I—(pray for me, that it may be so!) I shall be summoned to the enjoyment of a peace which passeth all understanding.'

"Startled by her unexpected vehemence, I was still far from entering into the source of this exaltation of feeling.

"'Calm yourself,' I replied; 'calm yourself. Such are the apprehensions of every woman circumstanced as *you* are now.'

"'Was *ever* woman circumstanced as I am now!'—cried Lady Redwood, clasping her hands. 'Did ever woman sacrifice her happiness, her principles, her tenderness, to be rewarded as I have been?—to ask for bread (even the nutriment of a craving heart) and receive a stone;—to have forsaken her own people and her father's house, for the sake of one from whose bosom she is cast forth to perish!'—

"'What mean you, Mary?' I exclaimed, 'explain the cause of this excitement.'

"'Does it need interpretation, that the worm, long trodden under foot, should at length turn upon the iron heel by which its helplessness has been bruised?—Is it so strange—so miraculous—that even *I*, lowly and humiliated as I am, should pause upon the brink of the grave, and grieve that my youth has been spent in vain; the warth impulses of my heart lavished on empty air, cast upon the waters,—disowned, disdained, polluted!

"'Suffer me to conduct you home," said I, with assumed calmness; for I was now persuaded that my wife was labouring under a paroxysm of insanity.

"'No!'—cried Lady Redwood.—'No! Since I have been unable to control the impulses of an overcharged heart, *here* let me speak; here, where the Almighty, to whose mercy I am hastening, looks down upon my sorrow;—where the abundance and beauty which nature has shed around me to so little purpose, remind me that *something* exists on earth to render death an act of resignation.'

"'My dear Mary, you alarm me and injure yourself by *this* violence,' said I, inexpressibly awed by the solemnity of her voice and gestures, 'You will yet live many years for the enjoyment of—'

"'Hush!' interrupted my wife, turning suddenly towards me. But that a voice has spoken to me,—but that I *know* myself on the brink of the great abyss, think you that my own lips, my own withered heart would have unclosed? Talk

not to me of living!—Earth has no shelter for me but the grave.'

" 'Mary—Mary!' cried I, 'you are tempting Providence by these wayward ejaculations. With the poor, the naked, and the hungry suffering around, what right have you, the minion of prosperity, to rebel against God?'

" 'The eye of Heaven hath a clear insight into the value of its gifts,' replied Lady Redwood. 'Gold, silver and gorgeous raiment, are not all in all in the sight of God, as in the sight of man. To possess the means of happiness, according to our powers of enjoyment, constitutes real prosperity. For me, I care but little nor have ever cared, for a lofty dwelling, obsequious attendance, or the trinkets of pomp. From my youth upwards, I have coveted but the approving eye and caressing hand of affection; and these were fated never to be mine! Admit then that I am a beggar, an outcast, a miserable—miserable outcast!' And the tears poured down her cheeks as she spoke.

" 'Are you serious in these charges?' said I, still hoping and believing that she laboured under mental delusion. 'Having rejected all my overtures of affection, of regard, of friendship, do you now accuse me of having been the first to outrage our vows of wedded love?'

" 'Wherefore accuse you;—to whom have I to appeal for pity, or redress?—Listen to me! You know as fully as myself in what strict principles of piety I was reared. My parents, abhorring the idolatries of the world, taught their children to look upon images of silver and gold as things of no account to an immortal soul:—and so far it was easy to espouse their tenets. But they did more, and required more at our hands; and then, and then only, I grew rebellious to their will. What availed it to insist on the sacrifice of all carnal affections, when from my very childhood every feeling of my bosom had been devoted to my playmate Alan Redwood;—when, as I grew in years, that childish regard had deepened into womanly tenderness? My father remonstrated;—I told him it was already too late:—my mother warned and admonished me;—I told her that my whole heart, my whole soul were yours, and yours forever!

" 'At length, they ceded to my prayers—but their blessing on our union was even as a curse; for my father reminded me that whoso goeth forth to dwell in the tents of Belial must eat the bitter bread of his service; and that the worldling I had

chosen for my husband would be as an avenger to punish the sinfulness of my choice!

“‘And such,’ cried I, with indignation, ‘such was Mr. Walpole’s notion of the feelings to be instilled into his daughter’s heart towards her husband!’

“‘Blame him not!’ interrupted Mary, ‘He sees things after the manner of his people. Would I had never presumed to look on them in a different light. Yes, Redwood, even thus forewarned, I *did* dream, I *did* hope, that the companion of your infancy, childhood, manhood, had attained a chief influence over your mind, and might one day succeed in touching your stubborn heart. But lo! from the moment of our marriage, my trust was undeceived—oh! how bitterly undeceived. I saw that you despised my homeliness,—shrank from—’

“‘Desist, Mary, desist!’ interrupted I; ‘you cannot justify yourself in such assertions.’

“‘I can—I do! Remember your silence, your coldness your reserve,—your unwillingness to conciliate my gratitude by the smallest sacrifice to the opinions you had seen consecrated in my eyes by the precepts and examples of my parents. You treated me with scorn,—almost with insult. I forbore to murmur, and you despised me only the more for the tameness of my submission. You quitted me,—abandoned me:—then, when in the languor of indisposition I most needed the sustaining hand of kindness, you deserted me for the companionship of those whose heartless levity contributed more largely to your diversion. What had I in exchange for the tenderness of which you defrauded me? *My tears!*—Day after day, during your absence, I came hither,—to this secluded spot; to weep over my own wretchedness and count the moments till your return.’

“‘Why—why not even then address me thus?’ cried I deeply affected. ‘Why not deign to disclose a state of feeling which assuredly your own demeanor afforded me no clue to penetrate?’

“‘Was it in the nature of woman to degrade herself still further in the eyes of a husband by whom she was openly despised?’

“‘On my soul, on my life, you wrong me! *I too have been deceived—have deceived myself.* I believed you careless of my happiness,—indifferent to my regard—wrapt up in your own family,—accountable only to Heaven,—engrossed by unceasing prayers.’

“ ‘And were they not all for *you*—for your welfare?—Unless when, despite myself, an involuntary supplication burst from my lips that I might learn to love you less ; or that when I should be in the grave, repentance might overtake you for the sufferings you were inflicting on me !’

“ ‘Dearest—dearest Mary ?’ cried I, folding her to my bosom,—‘companion of my youth,—my chosen wife,—mother of my child,—why—why has this fatal reserve so long interposed between us ? But it is not yet too late ;—we have years of happiness in store !’

“ ‘No !’ faltered Lady Redwood, inclining her head (and for the first time for many months) upon my bosom. ‘But that my destiny is sealed, I should not have spoken thus. But *do* you really love me ? Can it be possible that all the wretchedness I have endured,—all the tears I have shed,—are attributable to the want of confidence which has suffered a cloud to gather between us ?’—

“ ‘It is—it is !’ said I.”

“ ‘I have wished for nothing but your affection, and yet—’

“ ‘Say not another word !’ cried I, again fervently clasping her in my arms. ‘Providence is merciful. With such prospects of happiness opening around you, Mary, you will live to gainsay your own predictions. We shall—we must be happy !’

“ ‘For months past—nay ! from the period of your departure for Scotland,—from the period when I became convincingly aware of your indifference, I have never enjoyed a night’s repose. Food has not nourished me—sleep has not refreshed me. Nature can no longer support the conflict.’

“ ‘Gazing earnestly in her face, I discerned fatal confirmation of this opinion.

“ ‘You must have advice !’ I cried—

“ ‘Willingly—since *you* desire it. But do you really imagine that drugs have influence over a disorder such as mine ?’

“ ‘The cause of your mental irritation removed, a restoration of strength will follow. Promise me, Mary, to take care of yourself !’

“ ‘I will—I do ;—and in evidence of my obedience, let us return home. The evening is growing chill.’

“ ‘The interest of our conversation had in fact prevented either of us from noticing that a heavy dew had risen ; which, in Lady Redwood’s state of debility, was highly pernicious. The next day she was worse. I had no longer any inclina-

tion to quit her side even for a moment ;—the neighbouring physician, whom I had summoned to her aid, admitted to me that it was highly improbable she would survive the event of her confinement ! Unwilling as I was to admit the intervention of a third person between us in our altered state of feeling, I considered it a duty to the Walpole family to apprise them of their daughter's precarious condition ; nor, in the wretchedness and repentance of my soul, did I hesitate to acknowledge my past wrongs against her, and my earnest desire to redeem them. In the course of a day or two they arrived at Farminghurst ; and they, who had been such unwelcome visitors in the house of feasting, were all that could be wished in the house of mourning. The stern grief of the old man who had so laboured to subdue every human emotion within his heart, was inexpressibly affecting ; and Martha and her mother were too much softened by the sight of Mary's suffering, to indulge in their former asperities. It seemed to afford peculiar satisfaction to poor Lady Redwood to see us all once more united on a friendly footing.

“ From the period of that fatal day, she had never been permitted to quit her own room ; and nothing would persuade poor Martha, who was truly and tenderly attached to her sister, but that extreme care, the skill of her attendants, and above all the vigour of youth renovated by prospects of returning happiness, would carry her in safety through her evil day. But Mary knew better ;—from the first she declared her death as certain, and never swerved from the opinion.

“ ‘ My sister wants to delude you into believing me a false propheticess,’ said she, with a smiling face and extended hand, one day as I approached her couch. ‘ Do not lend your ear to her, dearest Alan ; or you will perhaps turn aside from the petitions and remonstrances I have still to offer !—It will soon be too late ! In the struggle of that hour, I shall have no voice to commune with my husband.

“ ‘ If you have a wish to express,’ I faltered, seating myself beside her, ‘ for the ease of your own mind, however needlessly, give it utterance.’

“ ‘ The spring comes forward so beautifully,’ said she, pointing with her thin hand to the window, round which the China roses were already clustering, ‘ the weather is so mild, so soft, so balmy, that I was in hopes of being able to reach that dear old spot with you again ;—that spot where your first kind tears of mercy announced that my day of tribulation was over !’

"Wait another week," said I, in a low voice, "and we will go there again together."

"Another week!" murmured Mary, with a mournful wave of the head. "In another week I shall be—— No matter,—why should I breathe a word to grieve you? No, Alan—no! I shall go hence no more borne upon my own feet, or with the impulses of living breath in my bosom. And therefore, dearest, let me hasten to claim a promise at your hands. When all is over here, bequeath my poor babe to my mother's care, and quit a spot associated with so many unwelcome impressions. Go abroad—travel—bend your eyes upon other faces till you have forgotten poor Mary's;—and—"

"Never, never!" cried I, pressing her hands within my own.

"It is presumptuous to suppose your bosom formed of other than mortal texture," she replied, striving to smile. "It is in the nature of the human heart to forget;—it is in the nature of the human heart to love again,—again and again. Only, dearest Alan, when you are about to take a new wife to your bosom—" (she prevented my remonstrances by placing her cold hand on my lips) "pause for a moment to recall the evil effects of former precipitancy!—Pause, to consider whether between yourself and the object of your affections, there exists that congeniality of principles, opinions, and condition, without which wedlock is a state of penance;—whether you are disposed—nay, firmly determined, and at every personal sacrifice—to secure her happiness.—Less than such devotedness is not love! Thus much for her sake and your own. For mine—for the sake of my child, if indeed my child survive, promise me, dearest, dearest husband, that however your fancy may be captivated by a fair face and pleasing demeanour, you will ascertain the principles and temper of the woman you make its mother. Martha—fetch hither the bed prepared for this babe of promise. There—Redwood!—there stands the downy nest of the little being my heart so yearns to look upon, and which I shall never, never behold.—Clasp your hands in mine, dearest, clasp them in blessings upon its pillow;—and promise me that you will choose for it a mother who shall be tender to its infirmities and forgiving to its frailties."

He paused and Lady Redwood hid her sobbing face in her hands.

"I promised, Julia.—What would I not have promised to ease one pang of the unhappy creature who was hastening thus unrepiningly to the grave. A few nights afterwards I was summoned from my bed to speak to her. She was restless, feverish ;—her hour was approaching ! and Martha Walpole had reluctantly consented to summon me, that a few more—a few *last* parting words might pass between us. She commended her servants to me—she commended her poor to me ;—the naked whom she had fed—the babes whom she had instructed. She bade me honor her father and mother ; be kind to her poor companionless sister ; forbearing to the Hobarts, the pastor delegated to feed my flock ;—and above all, after solemn exhortations of a still holier nature, she placed in my hand her own well-studied copy of the Scriptures, and on my finger a ring (Julia ! I wear it still, and you have grudged me the indulgence), containing her own hair and an obituary inscription. Her attendants then forced me from the chamber, and compelled me to retire to my own. And lo ! when I beheld her again, the struggle was over,—the flush had faded from her cheek—the beaming eye was closed. Mary lay composed upon her couch in the rigid stillness of death ; and the feeble wail of an infant in the adjoining chamber apprised me that I was the father of a motherless child."

CHAPTER XVI.

I charge you by your love, to take some pity
On this distressed man. Help to restore him
That precious jewel he hath lost

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

To one endowed with poor Julia's sensibility there needed no comment in illustration of the foregoing narrative, or in reprobation of her own offences. Recognizing at once the peculiar claims enforced by Lady Redwood's afflictions on the memory—the remorse of her husband,—as well as the weakness and wickedness of her own groundless jealousy, she was now more inclined to quarrel with Sir Alan's obduracy towards his patient and devoted wife, than to blame his too strict performance of those promises which had soothed her dying hours. She no longer wondered at the caution with which Redwood had yielded up her affection to herself—the vigilance with which he had studied her principles and practice; the sort of reluctance with which he had admitted to himself his inconstancy to the memory of the dead; and the fear and trembling with which he had elected her to be the mother of a child so solemnly committed to his charge.

And how had she repaid his confidence?—She blushed to think of it!—Her ungraciousness towards the Walpoles, whose importance in his estimation arose from so sacred an influence—her insensibility towards his little girl—her indifference to his household—her neglect of his humble tenantry—her incivility to the Hobarts—her untoward interference with a spot thrice hallowed by the memory of his unhappy victim! Poor Mary!—*who* could better sympathize than Mr. Trevelyan's daughter with the wretchedness of a neglected wife!—Poor Mary!—Lady Redwood actually

longed to be at Farminghurst again, that she might renew and replace every object connected with one who had died so young and so full of sorrow. She yearned to have the little motherless child in her arms;—to visit the poor—whom Mary, even amidst her worst of trouble, had never overlooked;—to encourage the young—whom Mary, in the midst of sorrow and sickness, had laboured to train towards the skies. Satisfied of her unworthiness, she felt grateful to Redwood for loving her in spite of all her faults; and determined to profit by the first hours of returning health to study the acquirement of Mary's spirit of righteousness, without neglecting her own spirit of conciliation. She thought it would be easy, she knew it would be delightful, now that she saw clearly through the clouds enveloping the character of her husband, to pursue a system of life calculated to retain his affections, and render their future destinies as bright as she had dreamed them in the earliest hours of her enthusiasm. Every day added strength to her frame; every day added vigour to her mind. She felt almost inclined to rejoice that the stormy onset of her married life had compelled her to a course of such severe self-examination; had arrested her in the wild career of girlhood—the flighty heedlessness of prosperity,—and rendered her conscious of all the gifts for which she had to be at once grateful and accountable to Providence. Restored to Redwood's affections and confidence, she was at peace with all the world. She had patience even with uncle Trevanion, and defied Dr. Hobart's most mysterious whisper to ruffle her temper.

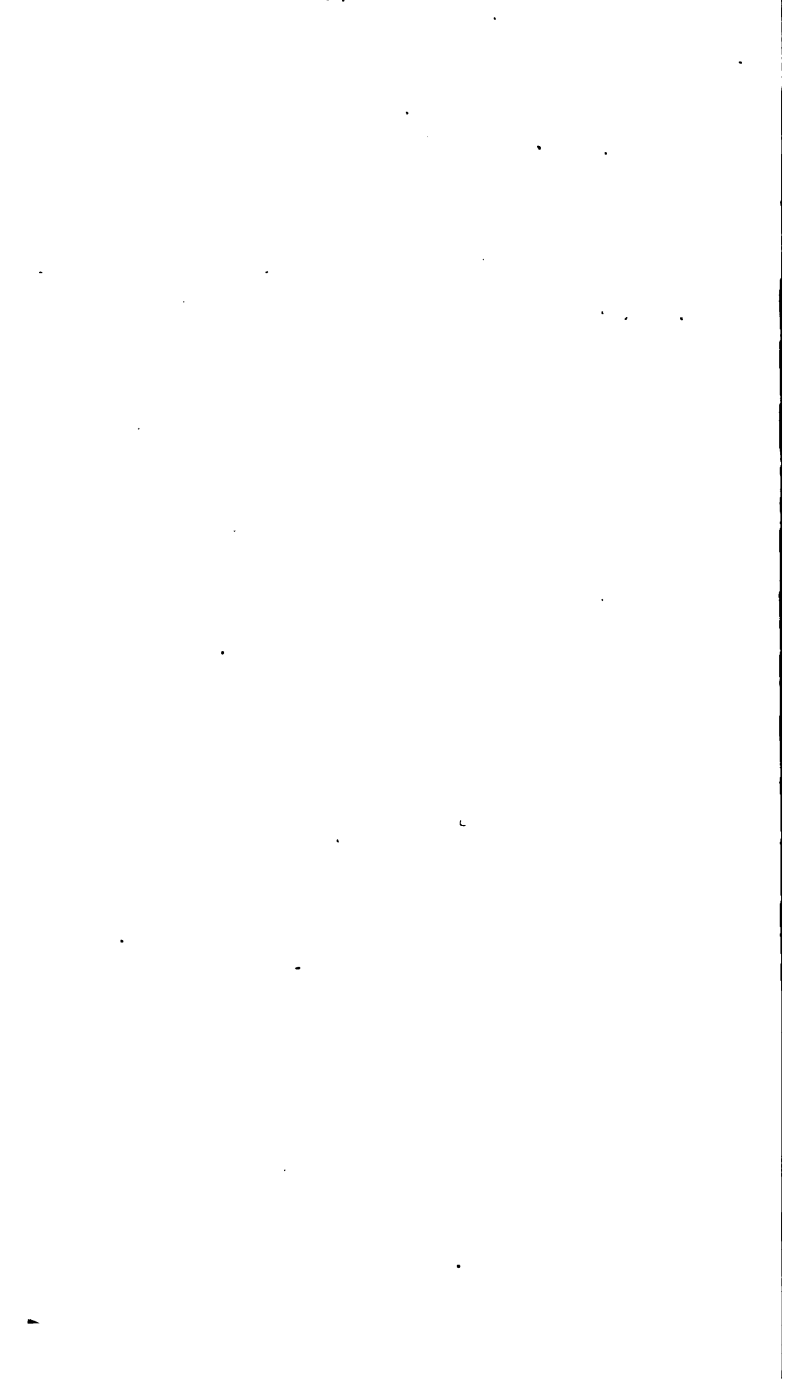
Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan, satisfied that nothing but the vigilance of their own attendance and the art of the Cornubian Galen had enabled their beloved daughter to overcome the miserable condition to which she was reduced by the indifference of the worst of husbands, profited by the earliest moment of her recovery to insinuate a hope that Sir Alan would never more remove her from their roof; and great indeed was their amazement when Julia, instead of seconding the petition, threw herself into the arms of her beloved Redwood, assuring them that there was no life for her save in his presence. Nor was their surprise diminished when, with the most winning frankness and many tears, Lady Redwood honestly accused her own jealous perversity of all her past distresses, and implored oblivion for the past, and indulgence for the future.

The approach of spring enabled her to devote herself to the fulfilment of "vows made in pain," and resolutions conceived in a moment of penitence. On the return of Sir Alan and Lady Redwood to Farminghurst, no further complaints were made among the old domestics of the cold hauteur of her entrance into her husband's home, nor had she any cause to complain of the dreariness of their journey; for, having extended it through the metropolis, for the purpose of visiting the Walpoles and claiming their charge, little Mary's sallies and little Mary's smiles afforded continual matter of interest.

A few months afterwards, the whole Walpole family became her guests; and although at times the dissertations of the old lady and the homilies of her husband were somewhat tedious, there was a conscientiousness in all their doings, and a tenderness of affection towards their little grandchild, which bespoke her forbearance. Towards Martha, she was even more kindly disposed;—for Martha, taught by sad experience, was so willing to sacrifice her predilections to conciliate the father of her dead sister's only child, that there was something almost affecting in the docility with which she, a middle aged woman, strove to acquire the qualities amiable in his eyes. With Martha, she visited the poor and comforted the sick;—with Martha, she encountered the oppressive inanity of the vicarage;—with Martha, she laboured to accomplish her mind by a course of serious reading, for the duty of presiding over her daughter-in-law's education. Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan were amazed when they saw that it was a chief object with their beautiful daughter, their noble heiress, to convert herself into a governess; and implored her to invite Miss Wilmot from her retreat, to save her from such ignominious drudgery. But against this plan there was a serious objection. Lady Redwood's preceptress was now herself a happy wife; and poor Julia would certainly have been left to the fulfilment of her task, but that maternal duties of her own soon interfered with the project.

Before the family quitted London the second year after their marriage, Dr. Hobart had the happiness of whispering to every family within ten miles of the vicarage, that he was about to travel up to town to administer the rite of baptism to the son and heir of his patron; and on his return, had the satisfaction of subdividing his discourse into divers heads. *Imprimis*, that the said son and heir was the finest infant in

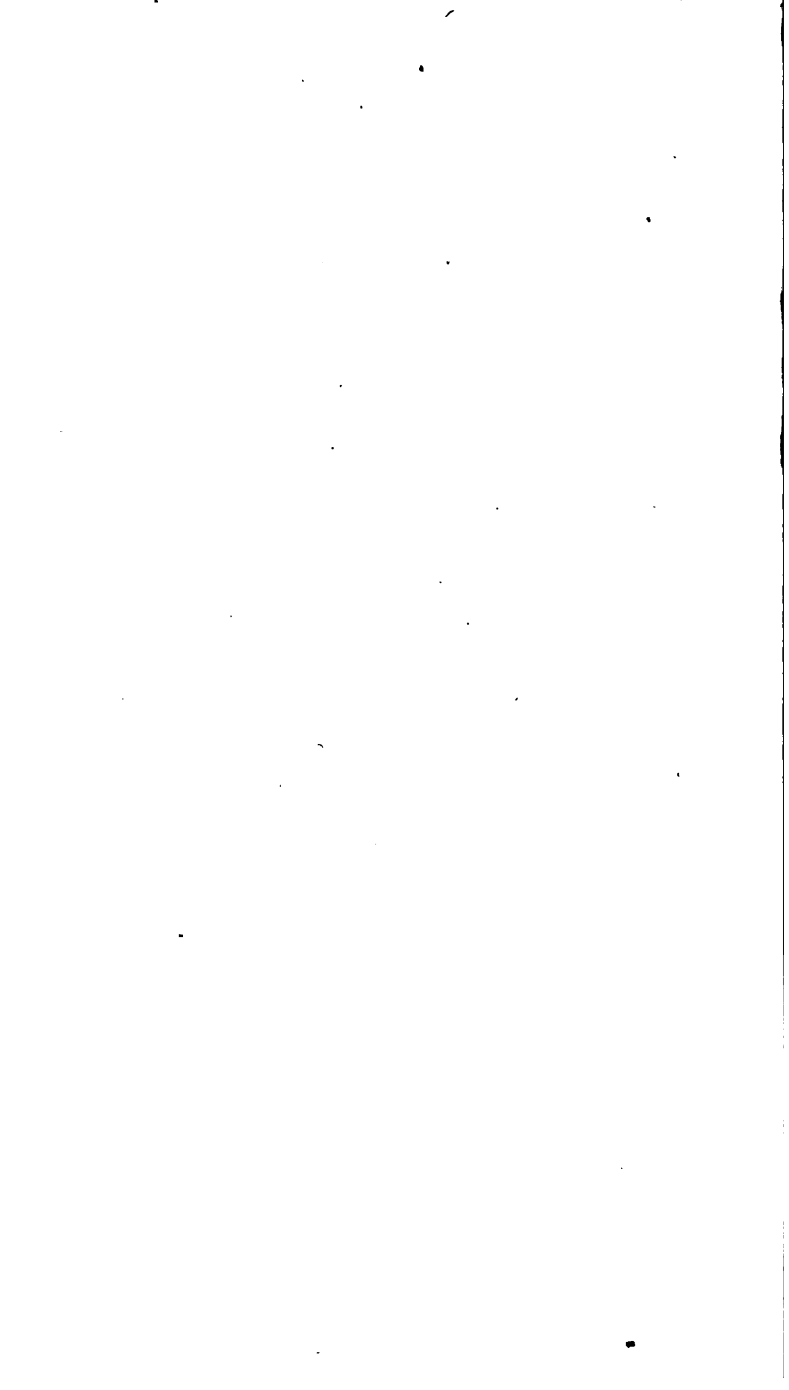
the kingdom; *secondly*, that Lady Redwood had gratified her husband by proposing old Mr. Walpole, in conjunction with her own father, as a sponsor to the child; *thirdly*, that her ladyship having been presented at the drawing-room by her cousin the Duchess, arrayed in all her family diamonds, had attracted universal admiration; *fourthly*, that he himself had been introduced by his patron, Sir Alan, to the nod of the King's Majesty; and, *fifthly*, that the united families of Redwood, Walpole, and Trevelyan were about to pass the summer at the Castle. Mrs. Hobart herself, indeed, was furthermore heard to insinuate that the Doctor had pronounced his patron to be the most fortunate of men;—nothing being left himself, his friends, or the parish, to regret, in his———**SECOND MARRIAGE.**



MY PLACE IN THE COUNTRY.

Il n'y a rien dont on voit mieux la fin qu'une grand fortune.

LA BRUYERE.



CHAPTER I.

To secure our own enjoyment is happiness ; to secure the enjoyment of others, is virtue.

SAAADI.

MR. MARTINDALE was considered a very fortunate man to return from the Cape of Good Hope with a fortune of ninety thousand pounds, shortly after he had attained the age of forty-four. Ages and their influences are comparative. An individual, who during twenty-two of his four-and-forty years has scarcely missed as many days of being seen on the pavé of St. James Street or in the dust of Hyde Park,—whose visage has been as stationary in the bay window of White's, Arthur's, or the Cocoa Tree, as that of the great Saladin over the Saracen's Head coach-office, passes for a middle-aged man, or rather for a man of a certain age : but one who has passed his time in purveying camels for the East India Company in the vicinity of the Himalaya, or planting indigo, or chewing betel in any other oriental settlement, is accounted a young man, should his final settlement with Leadenhall-street be completed within his first half century. Richard Martindale, thanks to currie, magnesia lozenges, and other bilious preventatives, had been so lucky as to lose sight of Table Mountain without the loss of his liver or the reduplication of his spleen ;—his fortune was invested in a very safe house ;—and on his arrival at Nerot's Hotel from the Downs, he thought himself, and was thought by the waiters, a very important personage. He was not indeed the inheritor of an aristocratic name, but his lineage was respectable and irreproachable ; his father having been an eminent physician in the town of Hertford, where his elder brother still practised as the leading attor-

ney. One younger brother was a clergyman ; and his two sisters were married to small squires in the neighbourhood of their hereditary home.

In such a family, secure from all pretension to fashion or distinction, the sum of ninety thousand pounds was as the treasury of the pre-Adamite sultans ! They had been talking for five years past of all Richard would do when he arrived ; and now that he was really come, and really pleaded guilty to the possession of a sum so nearly approaching to one hundred thousand pounds, they hardly knew how to make too much of *him*, or too little of themselves. A fortune recently acquired or still floating, which has not yet been subjected to matter-of-fact calculations respecting interest, investment, and net produce, always assumes double importance. To say that a man has an income of four thousand a year, is to say nothing. One set of people regard him as a pauper ; another set observe that, with management, he may live handsomely enough ; a third declare that he must not attempt to launch out in London society ; and the fashionable world vote him admissible only as a giver of moderate dinners, and a proprietor of moderate equipages. But give him boldly out as recently arrived in England with a hundred thousand pounds, and the whole world (with the exception of the mercantile classes) hail him at once as a wealthy man. What may not a man do with a hundred thousand pounds !—"No stud,—no service of plate,—no French cook,—no opera box ? Shabby fellow !—If a man with a hundred thousand pounds cannot afford to be comfortable, *who* can ?" People talk of the earnings of his thirty years' exile,—of the whole provision for his future family,—as of a year's income.

Such was the case with Richard Martindale. His elder brother the At——, but no, he called himself "the Solicitor," had long fixed a greedy eye on a small estate of fifty or sixty acres, adjoining his paddock, in the suburbs of Hertford. "Now *Richard* is come home," said he, to his smart wife, "I shall get him to manage it for me." The Reverend Jacob, like his namesake, proprietor of twelve blooming children, was no less anxious to build a wing to his parsonage, in order that the fathers of the twelve future tribes might not sleep above three in a bed. "Now *Richard* is come home," said he to his dowdy wife, "I shall get him to manage it for me." His elder sister, Mrs. Marriot, had an elder son ripe for college ; and, in his mother's opinion, needing only that

stepping-stone to advancement to reach the highest dignities of church or state. It had long been her ambition to behold him in trencher cap and gown. "Now *Richard* is come home," said she to her somnolent spouse, "I shall get him to manage it for me." His younger sister, Mrs. Millegan, whose husband, in addition to his own farm, managed the large estates of the Earl of Mowbray, and who was accordingly much noticed by the ladies at Mowbray End, had long been desirous of possessing some sort of carriage, even a pony cart, in which she could make her appearance there when company was staying in the house, without dust or mud upon her shoes or traces of plebeian moisture on her brow. "Now *Richard* is come home," cried she to her three eager daughters, "I shall get him to manage it for me."

For these cogent reasons, the different members of his family were severally though simultaneously careful not to grace the exile's welcome home with any demonstration of personal comfort. Both brothers and sisters were really and unaffectedly delighted to see him; but they were just ninety thousand times as fond of him as when, in his hobble-dehoyhood, a passage was taken for him in the outward-bound ship fated to convey him to the Hottentots and cobra-de-capellas. But instead of rejoicing heartily with him on his safe return, slaying the fatted calf, and listening politely if not attentively to his Eastern romances, each had a tale to tell of "moving accidents by flood and fell;"—of the badness of the times; the defaulture of parishioners; the rise of dry goods and tobaccos; the fall of stocks; the unpromising aspect of affairs both public and private;—and instead of their usual hearty joviality, each spoke in a plaintive tone with elevated eyebrows and depressed mouth. Each wanted but a little, however, of being able to face with cheerfulness the ills of life. Robert, the solicitor, honestly confessed that he had no doubt of making his way in the world, and bringing up his family respectably, if he were only able to accomplish the purchase of Clammer Mill Farm. Jacob had no fault to find with his condition in life; but it was a grievous thing to see ten or a dozen fine boys cooped up like quails in a poulterer's cage, or turned out on the village green to play with vagabonds or trampers, because there was no room for them in their poor father's confined and unwholesome house. Maria showed him albums full of her poor dear Dick's "Fugitive poetry;" and appealed to him, whether it would not be a thousand pities that so much genius should blush unseen

for lack of the distinctions of the University ;—while Nancy hinted that if she could but manage to keep up appearances a little better, she had very little doubt of securing one of the young Mowbrays as a husband for her daughter Anne ; only when the poor girls made their appearance in the saloon at Mowbray End, panting and puffing after their walk, with the complexion of a cook in the basting act, it was not to be supposed they could look to advantage.

Poor Richard was at first mightily distressed to observe the desponding condition of his kinsfolk. There could not apparently be four more uncomfortable families than those which had unceasingly favoured him, during his residence among the Hottentots, with glowing pictures of their domestic happiness, and entreaties that he would hasten to witness and share it. Their pretensions, however, were far from exorbitant. He was in hopes that five thousand pounds would cover the whole amount of their ambition ; and what was five thousand out of ninety ?—Within a week, therefore, after his arrival at the dapper residence of his brother Robert, he had promised universal happiness to the family ; purchased the Clammer Mill estate ; presented to Jacob the fifteen hundred pounds necessary to build and furnish the new wing ; settled eighty pounds a year on Richard Marriot ; and bestowed on the astonished Mrs. Millegan a handsome chariot and set of horses. He cursed the whole family in short “with many a granted prayer ;” and never was a finer or more glowing specimen of the short-sightedness and ingratitude of the human race exhibited, than by the dynasty of Martindale. Having so readily obtained all they asked for, they were now prodigiously vexed they had not asked for more. Bob had little doubt that his dear Richard would have made very little difficulty in adding the Springfield Farm to his purchase ; which would, in fact, have made the whole a most complete thing—a most valuable investment—a most saleable property :—while Jacob thought it a great oversight to expend so large a sum as fifteen hundred pounds on a college living, while four thousand would have purchased the advowson of Bramfield, where the parsonage and gardens were calculated for the reception of a large family (six more sons if he liked), and fit to step into at once, without incurring the perplexities of brick and mortar :—Mrs. Marriot woke her unhappy husband three or four times during his after-dinner dose, to lament that while she was about it she had not begged her brother to send Tom to Westminster, as well as Dick to

Trinity; and, as to Mrs. Millegan, *she* had an attack of the jaundice in honour of her good fortune. *She*, who had been the most abundantly rewarded of all,—she who had spunged for a pony cart and obtained a yellow chariot with a light blue bullion hammer-cloth—*she* was the most disappointed,—the most indignant of the whole family;—and knew not whether most to blame her own improvidence or the injustice of her brother. He was no longer her “dear” brother—no longer even Dick—but merely “Richard Martindale.”—Nothing could be more unfair than Richard Martindale’s partiality in the family; and to make *her* the sufferer,—his next, and once his *favourite* sister!—she who had been “little Nancy” in his early letters from the Cape;—and who had sent him out year after year, for fifteen seasons, a case of high-dried hams and tongues of her own curing. It was too bad!

Richard Martindale had expended £2754 7s. 8d. on the purchase of the Clammer Mill estate;—Richard Martindale had paid in hard cash to his brother Jacob, a sum of £1500;—Richard Martindale had settled on Dick Marriot the interest of £2,000; while on herself,—on little Nancy,—on *poor* little Nancy,—he had bestowed a London built chariot, with a pair of harness and iron-grey horses!—Even allowing for Richard Martindale’s absurd ignorance of the value of things, and predisposition to be cheated, the whole gift would not cost him £600; and, by a prudent purchaser, might have been secured for £470. And this was to be *her* portion of his opulence; this her share of the family bounty amounting in the aggregate to £6,854. 7s. 8d. !!!

While poor Mrs. Millegan railed at the cruelty of her brother,—her husband and daughters railed at her own bad management; till, in the exuberance of her wrath, she set forth in the town-built chariot aforesaid with its blue hammer-cloth, to quarrel with her sister Marriot for having so shamefully overreached poor Richard. Nay, before the month was over, hard words had passed between Robert Martindale and Jacob (in whose parish, the momentous farm of Clammer Mill happened to be situated); and Richard, on his second arrival in Hertfordshire from Nerot’s Hotel, found that those he had left desponding, were grown despairing; and that their complaints were now no longer of their circumstances, but of each other. No two of the four families could meet without bickering; and in consequence of this novel disunion, it came out that young Dick of Trinity

was privately engaged to his cousin Clotilda Martindale, sole heiress to the solicitor and to Clammer Mill farm ; and that the eldest of Jacob's dozen had been writing verses to Miss Helena Millegan the Mowbray hunter ! War was now openly declared among them ; and Richard Martindale, accustomed to the *pococurante* existence of Africa, and the dreariness of oriental lassitude, was amazed that they could all take so much pleasure in talking so loud and so fast ; and above every thing, was seriously disgusted by the mercenary character betrayed by every member of his family.— He had not been in England long enough to know the value of a guinea, the burdensomeness of a numerous progeny, and the mortification of being overreached !

At length growing somewhat irritable, he began to fancy himself bilious ; and having packed himself and his York-tan coloured serving-man (it is impossible to designate him a valet) into a yellow chariot resembling, with the exception of the hammercloth, his ill-starred present to the wife of Lord Mowbray's agent, he set off for Cheltenham as fast as four post horses would carry him. If he could not get rid of his indigestion, it would be something to get rid of his family.

CHAPTER II.

So thistles wear the softest down
To hide their prickles, till they're grown ;
And then declare themselves, and tear
Whatever ventures to come near.

HUDIBRAS.

Poor Martindale felt as if released from the house of bondage as he walked jauntily along the Montpelier Parade, arrayed in a new coat, new boots, new gloves, new every thing ; betraying in every look and movement the luxurious nabob, intent on his own rejuvenescence, and enchanted with the stir and cheerfulness of an English watering-place.

And if his object in visiting Cheltenham were to recruit his health and spirits, the effort was speedily effectual ; for at the close of ten days, he made his way to the spring, not only more spruce and self-complacent than ever, but having a very pretty woman appended to his arm. Discouraged in his attempt to diffuse happiness and sow contentment in his *own* family, he had conceived a determination to become the founder of a new family for a renewal of the experiment.

Although forty-four in years, and fifty in complexion (his face having very much the appearance of a last year's russeting apple), Richard was by no means an ill-looking man ; and, but for a little excess of showiness in his costume, might have passed for a gentlemanly one. Having continued his way to a high appointment at the Cape, he had lived there in the best official society ; and was in fact a better bred man than either Robert or Jacob, his brethren, who,

between themselves, affected to look upon him as a Hottentot. But whether ill-looking, ill-dressed, ill-bred, or well, it mattered not. A handsome equipage, and the reports circulated by his York-tan coloured servant, had induced an opinion that he was a man of millions; and it naturally followed that he soon became an object of universal esteem and admiration. It happened that a Scotch banker, the brother or cousin of his own agent, was sojourning at Cheltenham; through whose busy intervention, divers loo-playing dowagers and mammas of many daughters, managed to make the acquaintance of the bachelor-nabob. They found Richard Martindale quite ready to fall in love, and be fallen in love with: and with the natural hankering after a little bit of dignity so remarkable among the wise men and the foolish who visit us from the East, he soon anchored his affections on Miss Mary-Matilda Grinderwell, daughter of a Dorsetshire Baronet; a bewitching creature, with pink cheeks, flaxen hair, a stiff muslin frock and coloured shoes, exactly after the pattern of an angel in a pantomime, or a doll at a bazaar. Sir John and Lady Grinderwell were enchanted with the prospect of securing such a son-in-law; and though, on examination into his exchequer and treasury estimates, Mr. Martindale proved to have exactly four hundred and fifteen thousand pounds less than common fame had led them to expect, he had quite as much as warranted them in calling him "a man of four or five thousand a year," (for a Baronet of landed estate knew better than to talk about eighty-five thousand pounds,) and they had the satisfaction to perceive that nothing could be more liberal and docile than his notions about settlements for his dear Mary-Matilda, and her future family.

As Mr. Martindale was somewhat out of conceit of his Hertfordshire relatives, and as Lady Grinderwell was of opinion that it would make room in the family coach if she were able to travel back to Grinderwell House without the addition of her third daughter's company, it was agreed that the marriage ceremony should be performed (without ceremony) at Cheltenham. Richard Martindale's chariot was as good as new,—his wardrobe quite that of a bridegroom; and as to his dear Mary-Matilda, the Cheltenham mantua-makers and milliners far exceeded any notions of fashion she had ever been permitted to indulge. A showy flimsy *trousseau* was therefore speedily gathered together. Martindale made a flying journey to Bath for the purchase of

trinkets and wedding presents ; and within two months from the day when his travelling-carriage first drew up under the gateway of the Plough Hotel, it made its exit in an opposite direction on a bridal tour into Wales. Richard was the happiest of men ; Mrs. Richard, in her bonnet and feathers, the smartest of women ; and if the York-tan domestic in the rumble did not show his white teeth by grinning quite so broadly as formerly, it was because a very sententious lady's-maid was seated by his side, who affected a taste for the romantic, and sobered him by her allusions to the pleasures of the mind.

A bridal tour, in fine weather, with an easy carriage and a travelling-desk full of bank-notes, is thought to constitute the height of human felicity. Mr. and Mrs. Richard Martindale travelled hand in hand for nearly seven hundred miles, enlivened by Mary-Matilda's somewhat diffuse reminiscences of Grindervell House, and the two preceding summers at Weymouth and Hastings, "where Pa had had to fight a duel with a captain of Hussars about her elder sister, and where Julia, the second, had been very near marrying a very handsome young man with mustachios, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the service of Don Pedro, who had since been tried for shop-lifting;"—as well as by Richard Martindale's repertory of anecdotes of hair-breadth 'scapes from boa constrictors and lion-cubs,—an expedition to the court of Congo,—the horrors of the tail of a typhoon he had encountered on his outward-bound voyage, and the head of a shark on his return. It would be irrelevant to vary the picture of their pilgrimage by a hint of all the damp beds, tough beef-steaks, sloe-juice wine, and sloe-leaf tea, they confronted by the way. All these minor miseries served as texts for Richard's protestations to his bride, that

With her conversing, he enjoyed hard beef,
Sour veal, or musty lamb,—all pleased alike ;

while Mary-Matilda maintained, for the first six weeks, that the tenderness of her dear Richard fully compensated the toughness of the steaks.

At length the November fogs set in. Martindale could no longer travel with the windows down, and was obliged to plead guilty to the twinges of a flying rheumatism. The loving couple having now been acquainted for four months, and united for two, had confided and re-confided to each other (like two benighted princesses meeting in a wood in one of

Mademoiselle de Scudéry's novels) all the incidents of their past lives. Mary-Matilda was beginning to yawn wider and oftener than was either becoming or safe, considering the state of the atmosphere; and it was at length agreed between them that, although travelling was a delightful thing, it would be still more delightful to settle in a good warm residence for the winter.

The world was all before them where to choose:—

Richard spoke of Hertfordshire; Mary-Matilda thought of London;—and lest either should obtain ascendancy in this their first matrimonial privy-council, they mutually determined on Bath. They could not have chosen better. Bath was precisely the place for the man who could select a carriage for country use with a blue bullion hammercloth, and for a lady who could set off on a tour to the mountains in a white satin hat and feathers. To Bath they went; engaged a handsome house, gave dinners, were “visited by every body;” and before the return of spring made manifest to Richard that he would shortly be the happy father of a little Dick, Mrs. Martindale, the daughter of Sir John Grindewell,—Mrs. Martindale, whose fine clothes were now replaced by still finer, and who wore such beautiful pearls and such a quantity of ostrich feathers,—was pronounced to be one of the beauties of Bath, and “quite the woman of fashion.” Richard grew more persuaded than ever that he was the luckiest and happiest of men; and Mrs. Millegan (whose daughters had been finished at a Bath boarding-school, and retained several correspondents there) was ready to expire of indignation on learning in what style her brother lived, and that Mrs. Richard Martindale's ball had been the most splendid of the Circus and the Season. The whole of the Martindale family had, in the first instance, received the announcement of his marriage as a personal injury; and their only comfort was in pointing out that one of a Baronet's many daughters could not but prove a very unthrifty helpmate. They had fancied Richard, at forty-four, a man of more sense than to be captivated by the first pretty face that came in his way; and now that he had actually become the prey of a girl of whom he was old enough to be the father, and who would doubtless make *him* father of as large a family as that which blessed the union of her own prolific father and mother, they cared not how little they heard about him. Clammer Mill proved a profitable bargain;—Jacob's wing had

been finished by contract so as to leave him two hundred pounds in pocket; Dick Marriot was doing wonders at Cambridge; and all congratulated themselves on having been so prompt in screwing what they wanted out of the pocket of "that silly fellow, Richard."

Mrs. Millegan was the only one of the family who was implacable. Had she dreamed on Dick's arrival in England that he was likely to make a fool of himself by marrying, she certainly would have spoken out at the period of his insulting her by the present of that useless, showy carriage; a thing, as Millegan observed at the time, that "would require a couple of hundreds a year to keep it up;" a thing, as Lady Charlotte and Lady Jemima Mowbray had been observing ever since, "quite inconsistent with their establishment and style of living;" a thing she had never sought—never wished for. Had he given her a pony cart, as she hinted to him, there would have been some sense in it. But a London chariot and horses!—and such horses! lame, blind, spavined, windgalled;—"Mr. Millegan had sold them for a song to the Red Dragon at Hertford, and they were actually running in the mail?"

"Little Nancy" (who was now a woman of some fifteen stone) could by no means pardon her brother; and when the newspapers eventually announced that the lady of Richard Martindale, of the Circus, Bath, had given birth to a son and heir, the sole ejaculation of her sisterly tenderness on the occasion was, "Much good may it do him!" It was but an augmentation of her wrath, when she learned from her brother Robert, whom as her husband's man of business it had not been convenient to her to include in her family quarrel, that this addition to the tribe of Martindale had been christened Grinderwell. "Grinderwell Martindale!—Perhaps some day or other to become Sir Grinderwell Martindale!—The euphony of such a title!—Why could not Dick content himself with one of the family names, Richard, Robert, or Jacob? Between a Miss Clotilda, and a Master Grinderwell, the Martindale family was likely to descend in a pretty way to posterity."

CHAPTER III

All quit their homes, and rush into the sea.

COWPER.

MUCH as Mr. and Mrs. Martindale were delighted, and had reason to be delighted with Bath, the summer season of course suggested that, although that lively spot is the country to London; it is a city to the country. It was indispensable too, to secure a change of air for the *accouchée*; but as unfortunately the period for Sir John and Lady Grinderwell's annual migration from Grinderwell House was already arrived, it was useless to think of accepting the invitations with which, from the moment of their marriage, they had been weekly favoured by the Baronet. Martindale suggested, however, (perhaps in consideration for Mrs. Richard's family feelings, perhaps for the advantage of restoring his sister-in-law Julia to the care of her affectionate parents, the young lady having arrived at Bath with her brother Captain Grinderwell soon after their settlement there) that they should join Sir John and Lady Grinderwell at Exmouth, where the family was about to pass the autumn; a project seconded with rapture by Mary-Matilda, who was dying to show her baby and her new set of pearls to Ma and sisters, and to whisper in confidence to Harriet and Anne how very strangely Julia had been flirting with a half-pay Captain of the Gloucestershire militia. The Martindales were therefore soon established at Exmouth, within a few doors of the Grinderwells; and, as Richard repeatedly observed to an old Cape chum whom he accidentally met there, nothing could be pleasanter or more cheerful than their little family party. So many young

people; so much music; so much riding, driving, and dancing; so many little supper parties; so many large dinner parties at his own house; besides gipseysings, picnics, and other manœuvres invented by Baronets of large family and small fortune; the budding beauties of Master Grinderwell, and the promise of a second olive branch to make glad his heart;—all was auspicious, all was cheering, all was satisfactory!—

“Ay, ay!” growled Edward Warton, a cunning old bachelor, who, like his friend, had amassed a considerable fortune on the shores of Table Bay, but was too wise to squander a shilling of it even on himself. “I see you have married half a dozen of wives instead of one.—Good look out for old Grinderwell, deuced bad one I take it, for your weekly bills!—Nunky pays for all, eh, Dick?—Sharp woman, that old mother-in-law!—Sad *do*, I fear, this match of your’s!—Always a sister or two staying in the house, eh Dick?—Take care they don’t eat you out of house and home!—But I forgot; you’ve got no home, I fancy?—Only a gim-crack lodging-house at a watering place!”—

“I have a very excellent mansion in Bath,” said Martindale with indignation, “where I hope you will come and see me—that you may humanize your notions a little respecting my wife and her family.”

“Bath!—what a place to live in! a mob of swindlers, dowagers, and decayed spinsters! Bath!—Why not purchase a good substantial country seat at once; which would have given you a stake in the country, and a respectable roof under which to bring up your children, eh Dick?”—

“I had none when I hired my house in the Circus.”

“Now only just see what *I* have done.—Last year, I had an opportunity of buying an estate in Shropshire. Capital purchase,—eligible investment? Got seven per cent for my money, and had an excellent freestone dwelling-house and offices, thrown into the bargain!—Let it immediately for two hundred a year.—Too large for an old bachelor like me.—*I*, you know, have not been lucky enough to meet with a Miss Grinderwell.”

“There are three very much at your service,” said Richard drily.

“Thank you, thank you!—Not half such a good investment as my Shropshire estate. Fortunes of fifteen hundred pounds a piece, I understand; eh Dick?—The interest

scarcely pays for their daily visits to the confectioners' shops, I fancy."

"I never hear of Mary-Matilda's visits. I assure you. Julia, Harriet, and Anne, may have been occasionally seen taking an ice, by way of excuse for flirting with the officers."

"The officers? Poison—Marry into a family of such a description? I would as soon look out for a Mrs. Warton in a stroller's barn!—Ay, ay, Dick, you'll soon get tired of this ragamuffin watering-place sort of life; and when you've got a comfortable place in the country, let me know, and I'll come and pass a month with you."

Long before the close of the autumn, Ned Warton's predictions were partly verified. Martindale grew heartily sick of watering-places; and was beginning to think the Grinderwell young ladies too flippant, and the Grinderwell young gentleman too noisy. Sir John was a grumpy, discontented radical,—a professed liberal and domestic tyrant; and as to her ladyship, since she left off her maternal exercises, the poor woman had done nothing but stuff and sleep. It sometimes occurred to poor Richard, moreover that he was made a butt by the captains of hussars, lancers, dragoons, carabineers, fusileers, and fencibles, who lounged in his house, drank his claret, and flirted with his sisters-in-law. He began to be tired of a round of company, and to long for a quiet study or book-room to spell the newspapers in; and almost regretted that there were still three months unexpired of his year's residence in the Circus. To be sure the waters were supposed to be useful to his rheumatism; and he liked his Whist Club, and found his neighbours Sir Hookah Smith, and Sir Sangaree Brown extremely agreeable. But at his time of life (it was the first time he had ever been heard to allude to "*his* time of life," even in soliloquy) people wanted to be quiet. There was too much bustle at Bath for a man of five-and-forty, worn out out by a hot climate.

Nevertheless when the term of his stay there was on the point of expiring, his resolution to quit was almost shaken by the numerous arguments brought forward by Mary-Matilda for a renewal of the lease.—"She should so much like to be confined again at Bath;—and Ma had promised that Anne and Harriet should come and pass the winter with her!"—This last declaration was decisive. Martindale immediately protested that to prolong their residence at Bath was out of the question, that the air disagreed with him; and after one or two

floods of tears more nearly approaching to hysterics than any thing she had attempted since her scene in the vestry on her wedding-day, Mrs. Richard consented to accompany her lord and master to Nerot's Hotel, till they could procure a suitable residence in town. It was not that she disliked the notion of figuring in London; but she had a shrewd suspicion that, although a somebody at Bath and a very considerable somebody at Exmouth, she should be a nobody in the metropolis. "*Tel brille au second rang qui s'éclipse au premier ;*" and, after shining as a fixed star in the Circus, it was very hard to dwindle into one of the thousandth magnitude in Baker-street, or Gloucester-place. Unused to London, she was certain she should find it very dull;—nor did her arrival in Clifford-street on a foggy evening in November, tend to brighten her opinions on the subject. It was not till, at the close of a week, she found herself comfortably settled in a handsome house in Harley-street, with an equally handsome establishment, that she began to admit the possibility of living in London.

Richard Martindale was now happier than he had been since the first fortnight of his original arrival at Cheltenham.

In Harley and the half-dozen adjoining streets, he had at least half a dozen oriental acquaintances, with whom he could sit gossiping about things, people, and places,—events past, present, and to come,—wholly uninteresting to the kingdom in general. Instead of one whist club at Bath, he had now four; and instead of the captains of hussars, lancers, dragoons, carabineers, fusileers, and fencibles,—he had his friend Ned Warton, besides eight Directors, six Calcutta nabobs, and two yellow Knights Companions who had served with distinction at Bhurtpoor. With the assistance of a speculative agent, he still contrived to receive four thousand a year income from his eighty-five thousand pounds: and as his brother Robert often observed, "a man might really live like a prince on such a fortune;—and do something for his family into the bargain."

CHAPTER IV.

A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN every great metropolis there must necessarily exist a great variety of circles and coteries, as of classes in the vegetable or animal creation. It is absurd to attempt the sweeping distinctions of equestrian and pedestrian, patrician and plebeian, in a city numbering a million and a half of inhabitants. Even the minority of the patricians may be subdivided into several classes; and as to the plebeians, Linnaeus himself would be puzzled to dispose of the varieties!

Now the coterie to which the Martindales instinctively attached themselves, was of the genus called "dinner-giving people," a large and (as the newspapers say) "influential" body (chiefly resident in the N. N. W. of London), who make it the business of their lives to assemble at their tables three or four times a month sixteen well dressed individuals, severally possessed of an amount of plate, linen, china, and domestics, equal to their own; and who in reward for this mechanical act of hospitality, are entitled to dine on all the other days, in a company equally numerous, and on viands equally delicate. The ambition of displaying at their own board, meat in due season and fruit out of it,—of obtaining Sir Thomas' opinion that *their* hock is superior to that of Sir Charles, and securing Lady Charlotte's verdict that *their* peaches are three weeks earlier than those of Sir Thomas,—suffices for their happiness; and there is a steadiness of dull decorum about the tribe, an affectation of rationality and "charming people"-sort of excellence, essentially different from the sprightliness of ball-haunters and

the brilliancy of genuine fashionables. Fashionables and ball-haunters of course occasionally dine out; but they always remain distinct from the lumbering class of regular dinner-giving people.

In this vocation, the Martindales shone superior. Their plate was new and handsome, their establishment numerous; and among all the mercantile baronets and oriental dignitaries frequenting the house, it was decided that except Mr. Calicut the Director (whose table was supplied by his own farm in Surrey,) not a family in Harley-street, "did the thing in better style." Nothing can be easier than to become the nucleus of a little knot of society on similar terms. An exchange of dinners among persons ever so slightly acquainted, is no robbery; but a sort of mutual benefit company, whose credits and debits are honestly and accurately balanced. But in addition to this, the *business* of his life, Richard Martindale was not without his pleasures. Like all orientals, he was a loungeur by profession. There was nothing so delightful to him as to saunter into his club (a club well deserving the name of "The Millionaire"), and gossip *tchow tchow* with a knot of other elderly gentlemen of equally gamboured complexion;—to hear and contribute to the last new rumours from Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Ceylon, the Mauritius, the Cape;—to wonder over old jungle stories, and new romances concerning the cholera;—to elephantize in Asiatic grandiloquence, revel in Asiatic reminiscences, and grow poetical concerning the turbot and lobster-sauce of the preceding day and the anticipated haunch of the following. And then he loved to wander up and down St. James's-street, linked by either arm to some well-fed, well-dressed, middle-aged, middle-talented man; ready, like himself, to measure inch by inch, with Lilliputian labour, the last arguments of Peel, or the latest eloquence of Brougham; to sneer at Macauley as a theorist, or break their heads against the castiron compactness of an article by Fonblanque; to give their opinions upon all things and all people as lengthily and emphatically as if they were worth listening to; and to take their ease and their ice at Grange's, or their sandwich at the Cocoa Tree. Essentially a good-humoured, happy, and happy-making man, poor Richard Martindale, exulting in comfort at home and popularity abroad, was one of the most contented and in-offensive among the do-nothings of the west end.

Even his wife,—who, as a very silly woman, with three giggling sisters, four impudent brothers, and a spunging

father and mother, might have been expected to form some drawback on his domestic enjoyments,—turned out far better than could have been anticipated; for, following the destinies of her sex, she was fated to behold a *little* Richard Martindale arrive so soon after a little Grinderwell,—a little George so shortly after little Richard,—and a little Clara, Maria, and Sophia, in the three following years, that she had no leisure to do more than sit at the head of Richard's dinner-table, and exhibit her expansive person at a few annual balls in the neighbourhood of Portland-place. Her eldest sister had married the Grinderwell curate; Anne had eloped with an Irish lieutenant of infantry; and Julia had become the wife of a General Mac Glashun, chief agent of Bolivar, or prime minister of the Cacique of Poyais, or Chancellor of the Exchequer at Lima, or some such apocryphal dignity, whom she met at Bath, and with whom she shortly afterwards sailed for South America;—but Mrs. Martindale had very little share in promoting either of these three suitable alliances. On her own account, too, she had given up all interest in the attractions of captains of hussars, lancers, or dragoons, carabineers, fusileers, or fencibles; and, following the usual routine of an empty-headed, hollow-hearted woman, had laid aside the coquette to become the dawdle. Although still devoted to dress, her finery was a mere affair of competition with Mrs. Calicut, or Lady Kedgeree, or Lady Hookah Smith; and the greater part of her time was spent, as a matter of routine, in gossiping with her head nurse or the apothecary. In the autumn, they all went to the sea, for change of air for the children; at Christmas, they either paid a family visit to Grinderwell Hall, or took a course of the Cheltenham waters; but they were always back again in Harley-street by February, to be ready for the east wind, and their favourite Saturday dinner parties. They were regular in their appearance at the gay church of St. Marylebone on Sundays; regular in their drive afterwards in Hyde Park; regular in an annual exhibition at the drawing-room; and regular in all the other evolutions of the opulent mediocracy.

It is not to be supposed that such a career of contentment and ease could fail of attracting the notice of that busy enemy of mankind, who, from the days of Job to those of George III., has been so apt to interfere in the household happiness of the human race. Though the Martindale family had kept up nothing of that cordial intercourse with poor Richard which

marked his original advent at Nerot's hotel, and though their indifference towards him had unquestionably increased in proportion to the sprouting and spreading of his olive branches, there was a decent degree or exhibition of friendliness kept up among them. Whenever Robert or Jacob visited London on business, they dined in Harley-street; and usually returned the compliment by a leash of partridges on the first of September, or a brace of pheasants on the first of October, when they were sure the family were out of town; and on occasion of Mrs. Richard's annual accouchement, her spouse, in the fulness of his joy, made it a point to despatch a letter of announcement to each of his sisters and sisters-in-law.

But various changes had now taken place in the united Martindale clan. Marriot senior, the drowsy, was now sleeping his last sleep; and Marriot junior, the genius (to whose education uncle Richard had so absurdly dedicated the sum of two thousand pounds), was reigning in his stead. Having augmented his paternal estate by the sum of fifteen thousand pounds reluctantly ceded with the fair hand of his daughter Clotilda, by his uncle the attorney, Mr. Marriot of Starling Park had become, or fancied himself to have become, a man of some consequence in the county. As the relative of their agent the worthy Millegan, the Mowbrays were in the habit of honouring him with a gracious bow when they saw him at the Hoo races, or the cricket matches or archery meetings of the county: and of inviting him with his showy bride to all their public days at Mowbray End.

But on the spring succeeding his fortunate marriage, Richard Marriot, giving loose perhaps to the inspirations of that genius so much lauded by his mother, took it into his head to pass a month or two in town. He was now in possession of nearly three thousand a year, and shrewdly suspected himself to be almost as great a man as his uncle Richard; and having, by means of a house agent, settled himself in a half dirty, half tawdry house in Welbeck-street, flew to secure an introduction for his talking, showy, superficial bride, to Mrs. Richard; who, as a baronet's daughter, was accounted the grandee of the Martindale family. Marriot had hinted to Clotilda, previous to their arrival in town, that very likely aunt Richard might be moved to introduce her into society and present her at court; and the belle of the country town had preconceived a notion of the matron of Harley-street as of the most fashionable, or as she called it *tonish* woman in London.

A large and rapid increase of family is said to be as bad for the temper as for the figure; and however copiously developed Mrs. Richard Martindale's organ of philoprogenitiveness, certain it is that she was by no means so mild and conciliating as when figuring of yore in the Bath pump-room; or playing the chaperon to her sisters on the esplanade at Weymouth. Her nephew Marriot, moreover, was precisely one of the human beings towards whom her milk of human kindness was thoroughly soured. She could never forgive him the sacrifice of two thousand pounds (two thousand pounds, robbed as it were by anticipation from her unborn progeny) to affix an empty initial honour to the name of an individual whose obscure existence at Starling Park certainly demanded no such evidence of scholarship. She had always disliked Mr. Marriot as a presuming consequential young gentleman: and now that he had assumed new dignity, both squirearchical and matrimonial, she prepared herself to dislike him more than ever. She would have borne almost any other relative of her husband's. Poor William, the son of the Rev. Jacob, who was now married to one of his Millegan cousins, and settled as an under master at Charter House School, was always warmly though patronizingly welcomed in Harley-street; but Mr. and Mrs. Marriot, with their bright green carriage, and passion for finery and sight-seeing, were poor Mrs. Richard's aversion, or, as Liston says, 'I may say her *favourite* aversion.'

Now Clotilda was one of those impenetrable persons, to whom it was almost impossible to give offence. An only daughter,—the sole heiress of one of the most opulent and influential residents in a small country-town, who, from possessing considerable electioneering tact, was always very much courted in his own person as well as in those of his wife and daughter,—she had been in the habit of considering herself of so much importance, that she could not for an instant suppose that any one was inclined to think of her disparagingly, or treat her disrespectfully. She had considered herself a very fine thing when worshipped at the country balls as Miss Clotilda Martindale; but she thought herself a much finer as Mrs. Marriot of Starling Park, with a new carriage of her own, a new visiting ticket, a new set of pearls mounted in cornucopias, and above all,—a "Place in the Country." That Mrs. Richard Martindale could be inclined to slight a person thus variously and richly endowed, was of course out of the question; and when young Mrs. Marriot paid her

first visit in Harley-street, laughing and talking as loud as possible to show the ease of her manners, and the indignant aunt received her with the coldest and most repellent taciturnity, the self-satisfied bride determined that the apathy of the Baronet's daughter was but a distinguishing trait of fashionable manners; and that it was now *du ben ton* to look sulky and affect a monosyllabic terseness in conversation.

Being well aware (from the long-standing jeremaids of aunt Millegan and uncle Jacob, against the wasteful extravagance of such a practice) of the Martindales' addiction to dinner-giving, the young couple were for some time in daily expectation that a festival would be concocted in their honour; and Mrs. Marriot had already determined to make her *début* on the occasion in her wedding dress of Urling' lace, with her new set of pearls. But when three weeks of their stay in town expired without the appearance of the anticipated invitation card, Mrs. M., instead of growing affronted, assured her husband that it was no longer the custom of the great world to give wedding dinners; and that as a point of etiquette, their uncle and aunt Martindale were waiting for an invitation to Welbeck-street. Upon this hint, a "requests the honour" was despatched to them at ten days' notice, and Mr. and Mrs. Richard, from their natural or acquired predilection for dinner parties, could not find it in their hearts to be dignified and say "no."

Little, indeed, did the sullen aunt imagine, as she took leave on the appointed day of the little family of Martindales, busy at their evening trough of bread and milk, how mighty an influence that same dinner party was to exercise over her future destinies. During its progress, indeed, nothing occurred which did not tend towards her satisfaction. She saw that Mrs. Marriot was totally unaccomplished in the science of dinner giving. There was no cucumber for the salmon, although the month of April was half over. The white soup tasted of washballs; veal-tendrons were made to match with sweet-breads; and the dish of a large boiled turkey was garnished with parsley sufficient to have decorated a jack-in-the-green! An old fashioned blancmange was among the sweet dishes of the second course, and altogether the dinner was a contemptible affair;—just such as might have been expected at the table of an attorney's daughter, whose experience did not exceed the apple-tart and custard delicacies of an election supper.

But if, by the supercilious way in which she raised her eyeglass to her eye to investigate the arrangements of the table, Mrs. Martindale contrived to excite the choler of her niece, Clotilda managed shortly to return the compliment, and with compound interest. She had invited to meet the woman of consequence of her own family, the woman of consequence of her own neighbourhood. The Welbeck-street party consisted, in addition to the four Martin-dalians, of Mr. Blickling, the county member, and the Hon. Mrs. Blickling his wife; a Mr. and Mrs. Cleverley, of Poplar Grove, in the same neighbourhood; besides two Honourable Mowbrays, a younger Marriot (a man of wit and fashion about town), and one or two college friends of the host. In such a circle, the Richard Martin-dales had very little to say. There was no opportunity for orientalisms from uncle Richard, or nursery anecdotes from his lady; nothing was discussed but the agricultural interests and Hertfordshire topics; and instead of Portland-place balls, Wimpole-street concerts, and the beauties of the new Easter piece, Mr. and Mrs. Richard were compelled to hear of Hatfield, Gorhambury, Panshanger, and the theatricals of the Hoo.

Even when the ladies retreated to the drawing-room, and the *partie quarrée* formed by Mrs. Blickling and Mrs. Cleverley on one sofa, and Clotilda and her aunt on the other, commenced the usual tittle-tattle peculiar to such occasions, Mrs. Richard was struck dumb by perceiving that neither of her three companions were in the slightest degree interested on her account of a family squabble between her first and second nurses about a dose of rhubarb for her second boy, such as she was in the habit of quoting after dinner at her friend Mrs. Calicut's. Mrs. Blickling had the politeness to cry "indeed!" more than once in the course of her narrative; but it was clear she did not enter into the history with right maternal interest; and like Constance, Mrs. Martindale was tempted to exclaim,

She talks to me, that never had a son.

Mrs. Cleverly and the bride, meanwhile, having none either, turned a decidedly deaf ear to the whole anecdote; and when Mrs. Richard arrived at the close of the tale with "and next day, poor nurse came to me with tears in her eyes, and told me she should have no objection to stay, provided I made it a rule in my nursery that the under nurse was not to stir the children's tea;" she found that Clotilda and the lady of

Poplar Grove were deep in housewifely details of a different nature.

"Oh, yes!" cried Clotilda, who, no longer having the fear of aunt Martindale so strongly before her eyes, had re-assumed her loud volubility; "I assure you we have up all our poultry and vegetables from Starling Park. It is really impossible to keep a decent table in London unless one has a Place in the Country."

"I have generally heard," observed Mrs. Richard contemptuously, "that Covent Garden is the best garden in England."

"For those who are accustomed to adulterated London provisions, no doubt it is," retorted her niece; "but when people require things to be pure and wholesome and in a natural state, there is something so nasty, something so revolting, in the way in which Battersea vegetables are forced, and London poultry fattened."

"Horrible indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Blickling, "I own I never can prevail on myself to touch that tell-tale colossal asparagus, or those disgustingly bloated fowls. We have a cart twice a week through the season from *our* Place in the Country."

"Mr. Cleverley will eat none but his own mutton," cried the lady of Poplar Grove.

"And I own I never fancy any but the Blickling venison!" observed the Member's lady, with a grand, parkish sort of air and tone.

"What lovely jonquils!" interloped Mrs. Richard, anxious to get rid of these details of the buttery hatch. And the double violets are really quite luxurious! How very fragrant!"

"Pray let me offer you a bunch if you are fond of them," cried her niece with patronizing graciousness. "We have quantities sent us up from Starling almost every day."

"It is so convenient to have one's place within a certain distance of town," said Mrs. Blickling. "When I hear people parading about their estates in Yorkshire or Devonshire, I always recollect the convenience of driving down to peace and tranquility with as much ease as if we were going to a dejeuner at Wimbledon! Three hours take us to Blickling. We even have up all our cream for ices, and home-made bread. In short I look upon Blickling as the farm which supplies our table. I should hate a place in one of

the remote counties. I hope, however, I am not offending Mrs. Martindale by saying so?—In what county is Mrs. Martindale's seat?"

Mary Matilda, thus interrogated, could not but reply; and though it was with a visage the colour of a stick of red sealing-wax, she managed to make her answer as dignified as as periphrasis could render it.

"My father, Sir John Grindewell, lives in Dorsetshire. At present, Mr. Martindale *has* no country-seat.

The "at present" conveyed of course to the mind of two out of the three ladies, that Mr. Martindale was a landed proprietor in expectancy. Mrs. M. herself was probably in the entail of the Grindewell estates.

"No country-seat?—How very tiresome that must be!" drawled Mrs. Cleverley of Poplar Lodge, leaning back on the cushions of the sofa with a singular augmentation of self-importance. "And what *do* you do with yourself at the close of the season?"

"We generally go to the sea," snarled Mrs. Richard; where, I observe, we meet all our friends who have fine seats of their own, of which they are for the most part horribly tired: so that if Mr. Martindale and myself had any taste for a place in the autumn, we might find hundreds to be let, and the satisfaction of a choice."

"But that is *so* different from a place of one's own!"—ejaculated Clotilda, looking sentimental, and twisting her ermine boa till she pulled off a tail. "I declare I know every bush and briar at Starling; and there is not a flower in the garden which does not inspire 'thoughts too deep for tears.'"

"Nothing like a place of one's own!" cried Poplar Lodge.

"No,—nothing like a place of one's own!" exclaimed Blickling Hall.

"No,—*nothing* like a place of one's own!" echoed Starling Park.

"Besides, one cannot hire a place for the Easter holidays, or Whitsuntide, or even now and then when one's children require a week's change of air."

"We change the air by going to Brighton," said Mrs. Richard, trying to subdue herself into an air of mildness. "Most medical men are of opinion that sea-air is the best thing for children; and I am told Sir Henry Halford is decidedly of opinion that the West Cliff at Brighton equals Montpelier or Madeira."

"I fancy it is!" said Mrs. Cleverley. "At least, we make it a point to give our little ones the chance of six weeks there every year. But I own I can't endure Brighton in the summer; when all the cits, who have no country residence, go down there just by way of getting out of London. I like to go when one finds a little society."

"And then it is so delightful to get back to one's own shrubberies, after being cramped up to walk on that odious Chain Pier!" exclaimed the Hon. Mrs. Blickling. "I declare Blickling never appears half so fresh and green to me, as after staring upon chalk and shingles for a week; and really the enjoyment of the Hall after those miserable card-paper houses!"—

It was lucky for Mrs. Richard Martindale that the gentlemen just then made their appearance for coffee. The agricultural interest was getting too much for her.

CHAPTER V.

Papillia, wedded to her amorous spark,
Sighs for the shades—How charming is a park !
POPE.

FROM the day of this fatal dinner-party Richard Martindale's fate was fixed. Mrs. Richard, like the dying Falstaff, could do nothing but "babble of green fields;" and her head-nurse began to assure her that it was plain she had a "longing for a place in the country." Almost before the close of the season, she expressed a determination to avoid Brighton "while those odious citizens were there, who only went because they had no place of their own;" and yet, though protesting against every spot along the coast from Scarborough and Cromer to Ilfracomb and Tenby, she *persisted* in declaring that the seven little Martindales would not be able to exist seven days longer without country air.

It was in vain that Richard suggested expedients. "Rams-gate," she observed, "was so glaring; Broadstairs so glum; Margate so vulgar; Dover so bustling; Worthing so tame; Hastings so gossiping; Weymouth so countryfied; Exmouth, Sidmouth, Torquay, and the Welch coast, so inconveniently remote. Harrogate smelt like a gunsmith's shop; Buxton was full of Irish dowagers; Malvern was a mere stare over a tailor's book of patterns; Cheltenham reminded her too much of old times, and Leamington of new people. The water did not agree with her at Tunbridge; and a week at Southend would condemn the whole family to the ague."

Richard then proposed a family crusade against Grinderwell House. But Sir John Grinderwell had only been dead six months; Sir Joseph, her elder brother, had not yet taken possession; and the Dowager Lady was living there

pro tempore. As a last resource, therefore, he asked her what she thought of a round of visits in Hertfordshire?—His brothers and sisters, she knew, had often invited them; and his niece Clotilda would be enchanted to have them all for a month at Starling Park.

This was pouring oil upon the flame. Mrs. Richard, half whimpering half sulky, took this opportunity of pointing out to his notice that he,—the richest of the family,—was the only one of its members who was not blest with a country-seat; and the unhappy man, not venturing to suggest that he was also the only one who possessed a house in town,—was wise enough to look penitent, and very much ashamed of being but a second son. Even when assured by his wife that, accustomed from her infancy to the pride, pomp, and circumstance of Grinderwell House, she had no taste for a country attorney's square red-brick house, the front and offices looking into the by-street of a provincial town while the rear commanded only the damp Clammer-Mill meadows,—those meadows purchased with his own money, and of right the property of poor dear little Grinderwell,—he had not courage for reply or explanation.

"As to a country visit at the Parsonage," muttered the discontented fair one, "I declare I would as soon introduce my poor babies into a kennel of foxhounds, as among those great rude bears of Mr. Jacob Martindale. A boy in a leather cap and corderoys, is my mortal aversion: and five of them!—*five*! I am certain I should have one of my nervous fevers before I left the place."

"Well, my love, what say you to a little visit to my sister Millegan? She, you know, has no bears of boys to kill the children with hugging. One only of her girls is now unmarried: and I assure you nothing can be more orderly than her establishment, nothing more compact and comfortable than her house."

"Very likely. When people have a place of their own in the country, it is worth their while to make it comfortable, and to keep their establishment in order. A house in town is only half a home; one never feels settled in it; and the sort of rambling life *we* lead in going from watering place to watering place, is little better than sauntering away our best years without aim or purpose. It is so different—so *very* different, when people have a place of their own, which they embellish and improve for the sake of the children who come after them!—Heigho!"

"The *child*, you mean, my love; except the eldest son, I

know not who benefits by the outlay. Now at Grinderwell, for instance, your—"

"Where there is *rank* to be kept up, as is the case with *my* family," said the Baronet's daughter, looking like an empress, "the thing is very different. But at worst a mortgage for the benefit of the younger children will always bring matters straight. However, it is useless discussing the subject. *We* are never likely to have a place in the country, and it therefore signifies very little how other people arrange their affairs. I know not, indeed, why I should ever for a moment fancy you would desire such a thing. *Your* family having always been content to reside in a country town, and *you* having passed your life in a colony, it is scarcely to be expected that *you* should be sensible to the charm of an hereditary house;—a place where people strive to be respected, in order that their children after them may enjoy the odour of their good name."

"I don't see why people may not be respected in town," cried Richard, somewhat piqued by this last taunt. "People may always bequeath an honest name to their children. In professions, for instance, in trade, in—"

"Professions,—trade!" cried Sir Joseph Grinderwell's sister, despising the Hertford doctor's son, as heartily as if he had not elevated her to a condition of life far beyond her claims or pretensions. "I really hope you will not talk so before the children, for they are getting old enough to understand you;—and what will little Grinderwell think?"

"And how do you decide about this visit to the Millegans?"—asked Richard, afraid of being too angry unless he changed the subject.

"What visit?—I'm sure I never thought of any. There is nothing that would be more disagreeable to me than to be staying in a house like that of the Millegans, standing in the very shadow of a great establishment such as Mowbray End; and accepted on sufferance there like a poor relation, or the curate of the parish; having Lord Mowbray's carriage sent to take you to dinner, and her ladyship ringing the bell, and ordering it to take you home again, when she is tired of you!—From what I heard pass between your niece Mrs. Marriot and the young Mowbrays the day I dined in Welbeck-street, such, I am certain, are the terms on which Lord Mowbray lives with his agent's family."

"Millegan is his lordship's *auditor*, it is true," observed Richard Martindale. "But his own family is of very ancient

standing in the county. The Millegans have been respectable yeomen on *their* estate, ever since the reign of Edward the Sixth; while the Mowbrays have been heard of in the county only within the last century."

"Perhaps so;" replied Mary-Matilda, reverting within herself to the spreading genealogical tree adorning the dining-room chimney-piece of Grinderwell House; in which Grinwaldus (*its* acorn) figured as cup-bearer to King Edgar. "You see that all the importance of either family, such as it is, appears to be derived from having a place in the country."

A few days after this conversation, Richard Martindale, whose passion for home, whether in town or country, was not likely to be increased by the bitter tone recently acquired by his wife, boldly announced his intention of running down into Hertfordshire for a few days, to visit his relations; or more properly speaking, and more wisely acting, took his departure without any previous announcement. Mrs. Richard had therefore all the delight and glory of becoming an oppressed individual, of assuming a plaintive tone, wearing an invalid cap, and hoping that when she was dead and gone, her husband might not repent too severely his cruelty and neglect of so devoted a wife. It is true she had now been married nearly ten years, during which time Richard had never before been ten hours absent from her apron string. It is true, that Richard was now fifty-four, an age scarcely consistent with libertinism or frivolity; yet still there was something very suspicious about this sudden journey. The freak had entered his head while he was perusing "The Morning Post." How did she know that he was gone into Hertfordshire at all?—How did she know but that the staid and sober Mr. Martindale had received some kind of assignation or appointment through its columns, such as—"*"s letter is received; and Rosa will meet him at the time and place appointed, if he can make it convenient to leave town."—

Mary-Matilda hated mysteries. Why had her husband kept so secret his desire of a visit to Hertfordshire? Perhaps he was gone to consult with his brother the attorney, about some means of getting rid of her, and forming a separate establishment. Perhaps—But why enumerate the vagaries feeding the fancy of a peevish woman, parted for the first time from her husband, without any means of employment for her vacant mind. It was some comfort that she could send for

the apothecary; declare herself indisposed; lie on the sofa; take hartshorn; and sentimentalize herself into languor upon a diet of green tea and custard pudding. She was determined that at least, when the truant *did* think proper to return to the home he had so basely abandoned, he should find her looking as pale as the cambric handkerchief she now incessantly applied to her eyes. If she did not favour him with a scene on such an occasion, she might never have another opportunity.

Five tedious days had passed away. Poor Mrs. Richard, having scolded all her children and as many of her servants as she dared, and being too bent on playing the victimized invalid to admit visitors, was growing very tired of herself and her heroics. At last, on the fifth evening, half famished by her perseverance of sullen abstinence, and satisfied that as it was Saturday night, she had no chance of hailing her culprit's marital knock at the door till Monday morning, she suddenly rang the bell, and ordered a supper tray into her dressing-room. When lo! just as she had filled her plate with a provision of cold lamb and sallad enough to have dined a corporal of dragoons, the door was flung open, and Richard rushed into her arms. The surprise and disappointment were alike overwhelming. She, who had been picturesquifying in her dressing gown for five long tedious days; who had purchased a new bottle of salts for the occasion; who had rehearsed her shrieks, and prepared her agonizing flood of tears—she to be caught in the fact of a tumbler of Madeira negus, and a fat shoulder of lamb!—It was too ignominious.

"So you are come at last," cried the mortified victim, compelled to wipe her mouth instead of her eyes, as she accepted his warm embrace.

"The business was not settled till six o'clock this evening," cried Richard. "But it is ours, and Heaven sends us health to enjoy it."

"I don't understand you?"

"Have you a clean plate there, my dear?" inquired Richard Martindale, seating himself beside her before the fatal tray, having already rung a bell for a further supply of knives and forks. "Do you know I have had no dinner. I was in *such* haste to get up to you, to tell you the news, that I jumped into a post-chaise the moment it was over. How are the children?"

"You will positively drive me distracted. *What* news?—You have told me none."

"Your health, my love. How refreshing is a glass of wine, after a fatiguing day and a dusty drive! I suppose you expected me, as you have prepared supper?"

"How was I to expect you?—I may think myself lucky that I see you any time within these six weeks. How could I possibly guess when it would suit you to return home?"

"Didn't you receive my letter!"

"What letter?"

"By this morning's post!"

"I have heard nothing of you, Mr. Martindale, since you started off on pretence of a visit to your family, nearly a week ago."

"How very extraordinary,—how devilish provoking!" cried Richard, setting down his glass. "I was so very particular about that letter. I inquired so often about the post hour from my brother's clerks. By Jove,—here it is!"—cried he, suddenly detecting the neglected dispatch safe in his waistcoat pocket. "In my hurry, I must have forgotten to put it in the post."

"A very convenient excuse."

"Well, I am not sorry for it. The surprise will be the greater."

"What surprise?"

"Nay, since you know nothing about the matter, I shall punish you for that cross face by making you guess."

"You are really too vexatious!—After the week of dreadful suspense I have been passing, to break in upon me in this sudden way, and perplex me with all these mysteries. How am I to know what you mean?"

"My dearest love, do not irritate yourself," said poor Richard, drawing his chair nearer to hers, when he perceived that she was on the verge of a genuine flood of tears. "I will explain the whole business to you from the very beginning."

"No; I don't want to hear a word about it," cried the lady, retreating to the sofa in a magnificent fit of the pouts.—"Believe me, I have no curiosity about any of your family affairs. I dare say you and your brothers can manage them very well amongst you without any interference of mine. Doubtless Mr. Robert Martindale's professional advice—"

"My dear, dear Mary-Matilda!" exclaimed her husband, somewhat provoked after a long day's fast to be obliged to procrastinate his cold lamb in honour of her ill-humour. "You *must* be aware that my sole motive in making this

purchase is to gratify the desire you have so long expressed of—"

"What purchase?" ejaculated the breathless lady, jumping up from her reclining position.

"The Marygold Hill estate, my love. You know how eagerly you have beset me lately for a place in the country."

"You have actually *bought* a place in the country?"

"The papers were signed this afternoon. A great bargain, I am told; but the purchase was a serious affair.—Five-and-forty thousand pounds!—But it is the most beautiful thing! All within a ring fence;—a trout stream running through the lawn;—best preserves in the country;—timber magnificent,—garden superior to those at Grinderwell Hall! The Marriots' place a citizen's villa by comparison!—Drawing room and library opening into a conservatory of rare exotics? saloon forty feet by eighteen. But here is George Robin's advertisement of the place, which originally led me into temptation. Don't you remember how I started in the midst of reading the newspaper that morning at breakfast?—I could not hear or answer a word you said to me, after the notice of sale had caught my eye."

"My dear, dear Richard?" exclaimed the vanquished lady, holding the crumpled newspaper in one hand, and throwing the other arm round his neck. "Why did you you not tell me at once?"

"I think you must now be satisfied that I have neglected nothing to fulfil your wishes?"

"I never *was* so delighted in my life!—A finer place than Starling Park!—Forty-five thousand pounds!—Saloon, library, conservatory!—Show me the advertisement, Richard; show me the description."

"I can't,—ah,—here it is. 'That unique residence known by the name of MARYGOLD HILL: situate five miles from the stirring little county town of Hertford.'"

"Good Heavens! In Hertfordshire! Just in the midst of all your odious family! How very provoking! I'm sure when I told you that I should like a country seat, I never dreamed that, without consulting me, you would think of going and buying a place in Hertfordshire.—I would as soon go to—"

"The devil!" cried the indignant husband; and his new place in the country was the origin of his first serious quarrel with his wife.

CHAPTER VI.

Abused mortals ! did you know
Where joy, heart's-ease, and comfort grow,
You'd scorn proud tow'rs
And seek them in these bow'rs,
Where winds sometimes our woods may shake,
But blustering care can no vile tempest make.
SIR W. RALEIGH.

THE bustle of a removal is admitted to be so fatiguing to the body and irritating to the mind, that it cannot be too rapidly passed over. We might otherwise be compelled to admit that even the mild Richard was stimulated into a fit of profane swearing, on finding the leg of his magnificent billiard table very clumsily dislocated, and a sword-stick poked through the canvas of a fine Gainsborough. As to Mary-Matilda, an attack of nervous fever, consequent on the fatigues of the march, threatened to lay her in the family-vault forming part and parcel of the purchase of the Mary-gold estate ; while the seven little Martindales, from Grindewell the Great down to the ultima Thule or Fooley, little Miss Clotilda, were as inconvenient and inconvenienced as their nurses could manage to make them.

Let us therefore suppose the nineteen waggon loads of domestic furniture (including the thirteen grumbling menials from Harley-street) fairly deposited and fairly settled. But to imagine this, we must also admit the expiration of a calendar year ; for full twelve months were required to adjust the rival claims of the butler and housekeeper, to "this 'ere cupboard and them 'ere shelves,"—no less than to enable Mrs. Richard to determine whether the young ladies should

sleep in the front nursery or the back ; or whether the Worcester china vases would look better in the blue drawing-room or the chintz breakfast-parlour. It required a winter to ascertain which of the chimnies smoked, and which of the doors required listing ; and a second summer to find out whether the general clearance of evergreens from the courtyard they had been supposed to render damp, and the fall of a grove of chesnuts protecting the house from the western sun, would prove a seasonable benefit. Mr. Richard had from the first asserted that they could not expect to be comfortable in less than a year. The new plantations could not be completed, the new offices finished, or the workmen got out of the house in less time.

The year was gone ; the second tolerably advanced ; but the fair propriety of Marygold Hill could by no means be persuaded to pronounce herself comfortable. A new little marygold was budding ; and the fractious invalid could neither bring herself to like the neighbouring apothecary, nor reconcile herself to the loss of Lady Kedgerie's daily calls of inquiry, or her Harley-street neighbour Mrs. Calicut's hourly councils of gossip. Richard Martindale already affected the cockney country gentleman ; sported a fustian jacket, leathern gaiters and a bill-hook ; went out before breakfast, spud in hand, to make war upon the thistles and dandelions ; and above all, during the shooting season was never to be heard of (except by the distant report of his Manton) from breakfast till dinner, or during the hunting season from breakfast till luncheon. Mary-Matilda consequently found her time hang somewhat heavy on her hands. She was not yet on easy terms with her new neighbours ; and her own previous experience of a country life had been made in a house full of giggling sisters and riotous brothers. But her own girls were too young to giggle, her boys too dull for mischief ; and moreover a termagant head nurse, the inseparable prime minister of every silly indolent mother having more than two thousand a year, would only allow her the children's company at her own pleasure and convenience. She had no hereditary interests in the condition of the neighbouring poor, or the prosperity of the neighbouring farmers. All were alike strangers ; and though the Martindale family were very kind in volunteering visits to Marygold Hill, they always came with prying, investigating, arithmetical looks ; Mrs. Robert begging her to take her daughter Marriot's advice in the management of her dairy and housekeeper's accounts ; Mrs. Jacob, spunging for

cuttings from the greenhouse or a breed of her choice Dorkings; Mrs. Millegan annihilating the utmost efforts of her fine ladyism by a sketch of the superior splendours of Mowbray End; and Mrs. Marriot, senr. the widow, who was living in a cottage in her son's village, overwhelming her with tracts and controversy. Mrs. Richard was never so ill as after some of these envious, presuming people had been staying at Marygold Hill; and at length, though reluctantly, and with the loneliness of a long winter in perspective bethought her of renewing her correspondence with her own married sisters. She longed to figure before them in her new dignities of patroness of a village and proprietress of a country seat; and nothing was more easily arranged.—Mrs. Mac Glashun, who had fancied herself the wife of a Lieutenant-General of Poyais dragoons, now found herself the widow of an ensign of Irish militia, with two young children, whom she was very glad to quarter on the charity of any member of the family willing to provide them with bread and butter; and Harriet, whose union with the Grinderwell curate had caused him to be ejected from his cure by the rector nominee of the late Sir John, was now settled with him on a vicarage of forty pounds a year on the Lincolnshire coast, living on conger eels and lived upon by the *fen-flies*. Both, on the first hint of an invitation, hastened eagerly to Marygold Hill; and it was no small affliction to the pride of the arrogant Mrs. Richard Martindale, that Mrs. Trotter made her appearance by the north mail, and Mrs. Mac Glashun and her children by the day coach.

Poor Richard, always kind and well-intentioned, was only the more cordial in his mode of reception in consideration of their mode of travelling; indeed, he was far better pleased at the idea of having his two sisters-in-law as his inmates, now that they were tamed by misfortune, than during the heyday of their partiality for captains of hussars, dragoons, lancers, carabineers, fusileers, and fencibles. Moreover, if the truth must be told, he was not sorry to have an excuse for occasionally prolonging his day's sports, and taking a bachelor-dinner with the Marriots, Millegans, Martindales, or his new friend, Jack Cleverly, of Poplar Lodge.

Now this new friend Jack Cleverly, was perhaps of all poor Mrs. Richard's Hertfordshire grievances the most enormous; being a huge, large-limbed, cheery, back-slapping individual, with the strength and eke the lungs of

an ox, who looked upon the fair and frail sex (like the mares in his stable and the cows in his meadow) as useful animals, created for the service and delectation of mankind. Despising the great lady of Harley-street with all his soul, as too lazy to nurse her own children and too helpless to drive herself round the farm like his own stirring housewife, he was never to be persuaded into the slightest deference towards her nervous headaches; shouting whenever he sat by her at dinner as if he had been tally-hoing to the hounds, and slamming the doors after him whenever he was staying in the house, as if he were bullying the waiters at a travellers' inn. He was, indeed, a hateful creature in her eyes and ears; talking with his mouth full, wiping it on the table-cloth, breathing like a grampus, and sucking in his tea from the saucer with the impetus of the famous American whirlpool that swallows up ships of the line. Mary-Matilda's first topic of lamentation (after listening to Mrs. Mac Glashun's moving tale of those Occidental adventures which had terminated with seeing the unhappy ex-lieutenant-general hanged higher than Haman, on a Mexican gallows erected between two cabbage-palm-trees,—and trying to seem interested in poor Mrs. Trotter's description of her little parsonage-garden, with its slimy fen-ditches and feid exhalations,) was the misfortune of possessing a loud vulgar neighbour like Jack Cleverly, who had no greater satisfaction than in decoying Martindale away from home, brutalizing him with strong ale, and persuading him that it was a mark of manliness to defy the influence of an "affectionate domestic partner." It was in vain that Mrs. Mac Glashun described her sufferings when left a nursing mother in a torrid climate;—Mary-Matilda interrupted her to complain that poor little Dick had a chilblain in his little finger, thanks to Martindale's obstinacy in choosing to purchase an estate in a county notoriously the coldest in England; and while Mrs. Trotter was pointing out to her commiseration, that for three years she had been living in a fishing-hamlet, without a neighbour within forty miles saving the officers of excise and coast blockade and their spirituously-inclined consorts,—the lady of Marygold Hill begged to assure her that such a spot was infinitely preferable to a country house, placed under watch and ward of a husband's vulgar family. She appealed to the judgments of both, whether any thing could afford stronger proof of Martindale's want of knowledge of the world, than to sink half his fortune in the

purchase of an estate in the only county in England where no extent of landed possessions would obliterate the recollection, that "after all he was nothing but a second son of old Doctor Martin'ale of Her'ford, who had made money in Indy;"—and to their feelings, as daughters of the house of Grinderwell, on the ignominy of being introduced into the neighbourhood under the patronage of Richard's eldest brother's wife (the heiress of a rich brewer), and to the county in general, per favour of Mrs. Millegan's favour with the great people at Mowbray End. Somehow or other, both Julia and Harriet were disposed to harden their hearts towards the picture of their sister's distresses. They, who had been subdued in a rougher school, who had contended with cold and heat, hunger and bereavement since they flirted at Weymouth or pouted at Grinderwell House, could not connect the idea of misfortune with the wife of an affectionate husband, the mother of seven fine children, and the owner of a handsome country seat in one of the best counties in England.

Perhaps it was this obduracy which gave them a sinister position in Mrs. Richard Martindale's opinion. Other causes of dissatisfaction soon however became apparent. Mary-Matilda had been originally considered by far the prettiest of the four sisters; but, now, though the ten years which had passed over her head since the tour into Wales still left her flaxen hair and pink cheeks,—habits of luxurious idleness, and other natural causes had produced an expansion of outline far from conducive to her reputation as a beauty. Her cheeks were bloated, her eyes offuscate; little yellow ringlets hung scantily round the enlarged oval of her rubicund face; and, at eight-and-twenty, she might have passed for the age proverbially connected with the qualification "fat and fair." Mrs. Mac Glashun and her sister, on the contrary, attenuated by privations, had preserved their shapes, and therewith that air of gentility with which the choicest costume can never invest a dumpy woman; and no sooner did the good air and good fare of Marygold Hill restore animation to their features and bloom to their cheeks, than they shone forth as very pretty women, and came to be talked of as Mrs. Richard Martindale's beautiful sisters. The Hon. Mrs. Blickling insisted upon being favoured with their company at a popularity ball her husband, the member, was giving to the free and independent gentlemen of the county of Herts; and it was indeed wormwood to Mary-Matilda, who had made herself

obnoxious in a cheerful social neighbourhood by stickling for precedence as a baronet's daughter, to have her two sisters appear on so ostensible an occasion in dyed silk gowns, as a curate's wife and adventurer's widow ; and yet to know that they were fiftyfold as much liked and admired as herself. Now in London this never could have happened. Her Harley-street friends would never have dreamed of pressing their civilities on a Mrs. Mac Glashun and a Mrs. Trotter, who had no houses of their own in which to requite the obligation ; and even had they been capable of such a waste of magnanimity, the general indifference to family connections prevalent in London society, would have prevented any one from knowing, caring, or commenting upon the relationship, or instituting comparisons between the parties. They had not been established two months at Marygold Hill, before Mary-Matilda wrote to her favourite sister Anne (the wife of the Irish captain, who was now on half-pay, and settled on a small hereditary estate on the borders of Connemara,) to describe how very troublesome she found those wild heathens, the little Mac Glashuns, in her nursery ; and how much she was apprehensive that Harriet and Julia would assume the command of her establishment, and probably give offence in the family and neighbourhood during her approaching confinement.

There was no resisting this sororal appeal ? Mrs. O'Callaghan certainly *had* intended to pass a happy domestic winter in the bogs. But she would not allow poor little Mary-Matilda to be put upon ; nobody could say what might be the result of her suffering any annoyance during the ensuing delicate crisis. So having persuaded Captain O'Callaghan to become her escort ; away she went by long sea to London ; and, from the Tower Stairs, straight to those of Marygold Hill. The heroine was already in the straw ; but her husband (albeit somewhat startled by this third addition to his family circle) gave them a hearty welcome. All colonial people are hospitably inclined ; and though he could certainly have dispensed with the Captain's company, against whom, during his courtship of Anne Grinderwell he had conceived an antipathy, yet still any connection of his dear Mary-Matilda was welcome. It was still winter. And is it not the custom in Great Britain for people to collect as many as possible of their friends and relations at Christmas under their roof ? Is not hospitality an almost religious duty on the part of the proprietor of a " Place in the Country ?"

CHAPTER VII.

There are a set of joyless fellows who, wanting capacity to make a figure among mankind upon benevolent and generous principles, try to surmount their insignificance by laying offences in the way of such as make it their endeavour to excel upon the received maxims and honest arts of life.

ARBUETHNOT.

It was an awful visitation to the irritable nerves of Mrs. Richard Martindale, who, during her annual indispositions, had been accustomed by her kind husband to have things kept so quiet in the house, that the blind mole heard not a foot-fall—when the little Mac Glashuns, instigated by uncle O'Callaghan, set up their war-whoops in the hall; or when uncle O'Callaghan himself, after a second bottle of Madeira at luncheon, stumbled along the corridor to the billiard-room, singing "I am the boy for bewitching them," in a tone that would have drowned Jack Cleverley's loudest view halloo! Her head-nurse gave her warning, and even the nursery-maid "warn't going to stay to be made keeper to them two little heathen savages." Forced into a premature assumption of strength and authority, the nervous lady exerted herself to resume her post in the drawing-room:—and then things went worse than ever.

The treacherous Anne had evidently coalesced with Julia and Harriet; and great was the art with which all three prevented their nefarious proceedings from coming under Martindale's observation, by soothing him with their flatteries and pretended regard. It was vain for Mary-Matilda to hint to Mrs. Trotter that her poor husband doubtless found his solitary situation in the fens extremely disagreeable; or to Captain and Mrs. O'Callaghan that the weather was growing delightful for a voyage. They always contrived

that the worthy Richard should seize that very opportunity for assuring them that his house was their own; that if Trotter found it dull at Swamperton, he had better join his wife at Marygold Hill; and that the state of Irish affairs was not such as to justify his Connemara brother-in-law in a precipitate return to his Sabine farm. His wife could have found it in her heart to burke him for his officious hospitality to her encroaching family.

Nor was it only that their innovations produced real inconvenience and annoyance in the establishment; but the Martindale family, living near enough to have an eye upon their proceedings, and enchanted to have an opportunity of paying off to the nabob's wife the innumerable slights and insults with which she had beset them, took care to let her see they were fully aware that her hungry swarm of poor relations had alighted like locusts upon poor Richard's property, to devastate and devour. The elder brother Robert had died a few months before; expressly for the purpose, Mrs. Richards thought, of bequeathing sixty thousand pounds to the Marriots, and making Clotilda more vulgar and presumptuous than ever; but the remainder of the Martindale clan (rejoiced to find out, and to show they had found out, that the family of "my father Grinderwell," with which they had been so frequently twitted, was, in fact a tribe of needy beggars) constantly wrote her word that they would drop in upon her and their brother or uncle Richard, "when her own family had quitted her. They would not think of intruding so long as she had so much good company about her."—Wretches! not one of them but knew she had as much chance of getting rid of her sisters, as of that capital mansion known by the name of Marygold Hill.

Ned Warton, too, who had so long refrained from intercourse with his Cape Town friend, thought proper at this unlucky juncture to propose the month's visit with which, nine years before, he had threatened his dear Richard Martindale; and the lady, who, at any other period, would have rebelled against the merest hint of such a favour, dared not provoke the report he would doubtless circulate among their mutual rice-and-currie acquaintance in town, that he could not be received at Marygold Hill because the house was garrisoned with the poor relations of poor Dick's poor wife. She would have done better, however, to incur the imputation; for, after having vainly hinted to the O'Callaghans the propriety of giving up their comfortable room, and perceived

that there was a confederacy among her sisters to keep possession of their original quarters, she was obliged to consign Mr. Warton to a little poky chamber without a fire-place, commanding a picturesque view of the bottle-racks and knife-houses.

"Very well indeed; this will do very comfortably for my man. Sam! you don't mind sleeping in a room without a chimney, for once in a way?" said the crafty Ned, when Richard Martindale, followed by his own respectable body servant, showed him to his *gîte*. "And now let me see my own apartment."

Upon this hint, Martindale, stung by his irony, yet trembling at his own audacity, actually conducted him to his own bedroom; and Warton, who could not bring himself to feel the slightest compassion for a hen-pecked man, had the comfort, while he watched the unpacking of his portmanteau, to hear the altercation that ensued in the adjoining dressing-room, between Richard and his wife, on the subject of this unprecedented exercise of marital interference.

"We can very easily have a French bed put up for ourselves in this room," exclaimed the husband; "I really had not the face to make my respectable friend Warton sleep in that corner cupboard. Since you could not prevail on the O'Callaghans to give up the south bed-room, *we* must make up our minds to be inconvenienced for a short time. Remember, my love, it is for the sake of one of my oldest friends; and people are often obliged to reconcile themselves to such shifts in their own Place in the Country."

"I shall sleep with my poor children in the nursery," said Mrs. Martindale, her throat dry with rage: *you* may do as you please. I should like to know whether any other woman in England was ever turned out of her own bed to make way for a crackbrained fool, with the tricks of a baboon, and the insolence of—" Warton threw his slipper against the dressing-room door to warn the irate lady that he was within hearing; and Mrs. Richard Martindale, unable to face him immediately after such an exposure, chose to be indisposed, and dine up stairs. Shouts of laughter and the fumes of cigars and whisky toddy ascending from the hall, soon warned her that the monster Warton, and the brute O'Callaghan, were colleaguely over their saturnalian orgies; and very probably engaging poor Richard himself in a career of libertinism. "And this," said she, as she wept over a plate of partridge and bread sauce furtively brought up by

her own maid, "*this* is the comfort of having a Place of one's own in the Country !—"

It affords unlucky proof of the evil particles floating in our nature, that no compacts are more effective than those founded on malicious calculations, and a common animosity. Ned Warton, who, though he would as soon have put to sea in a sparrow's eggshell, as marry with Sir John Grinderwell's daughter, had never forgiven his chum and cotemporary Richard for carrying off a young and lovely wife; and who entertained a rooted antipathy to the fussy doll by whom his friend Dick had been so often prevented dining with him at the club, and going half-price to laugh at Munden,—no sooner discovered that the coarse, rampant, rollicking, Captain O'Callaghan entertained a similar dislike to his cold-hearted sister-in-law, than he entered into a league with him, offensive and defensive, to rescue Richard from her subjugation, or make the house too hot to hold her. Dick Marriot, too, the genius of Starling Park, who retained a strong sense of his obligations to his uncle, and who consequently despised the shallow woman by whom he was despised,—having taken a chance dinner at Marygold Hill after a hard day's hunting,—instinctively joined the unholy alliance, and even suggested a new mode of mischief to their adoption.

He undertook to point out to the notice of Mrs. Cleverly the frequency of her dear Jack's visits to Marygold Hill, as connected with the charms and ingenuous sprightliness of the widow Mac Glashun; leaving it to the well known susceptibility of the lady of Poplar Lodge to favour her friend and neighbour Mrs. Martindale, whom she detested as heartily as friends and neighbours in a dull country neighbourhood are compelled to do for want of better employment, with her opinion of the conduct of her sister in encouraging the attentions of a married man;—and to persuade the jovial Jack that the party at his uncle Richard Martindale's could not get on without him, and were much hurt by the infrequency and brevity of his visits. Jack was not the man to resist such an appeal. A house filled with three amateurs of whiskey toddy, and three lively chatty women, presented a real attraction; and even Richard Martindale, his friend, was no less surprised than delighted to observe how unreservedly he came among them, and how ready he was for a carouse with the brawling O'Callaghan or his nephew Marriot. Old Warton looked on with his cunning eye and

puckered face, and saw with delight that a catastrophe was brewing.

Now Mrs. Richard Martindale, on her inauguration into the circles of the neighbourhood, had not been so inattentive to her own interests as not to secure a partizan; and the same incipient ambition which prevented her from resting on her pillow till she had magnified her own dignity by the acquisition of a place in the country, had suggested her choice of the County Member to be her knight and champion.—There was something in the solemn dull impracticability of the well-looking, well-conducted Mr. Blickling, which forbade all possibility of scandal;—and it was therefore highly satisfactory to her feelings to roll into the Hertford ball-room on the arm of this mighty dignitary; or to hear the Hertfordshirians from the south-western extremity of the county inquire at the Hatfield Tuesdays, to whom their favourite member was paying such marked attention.—Mrs. B. like most county members' wives, was too much accustomed to see him bowing, and beaming, and philandering, after the fashion of Sir Christopher Hatton with Queen Elizabeth, to take the least note of his proceedings; and Richard was gratified to perceive that his wife, her pearls, and ostrich feathers, were received with becoming attention. Nothing could be further from gallantry than such a *liaison*. Blickling himself was a man who sometimes “spoke,” but never talked. Deeply imbued with a sense of his personal dignity as the representative of the county, and proprietor of one of its finest estates, he considered loquacity derogation; and having made it his maxim that men often repent of saying too much but never of saying too little, was looked upon as one of the most sensible men either in the House or out of it. Thousands of people said “there was no one on whose opinion they relied so much as on that of the Member for Hertfordshire,” without perceiving that he was never known to give one, but contented himself with bowing gracefully and assentingly to the expression of their own.

To her growing intimacy with this senatorial tumefaction, the recent occurrences in her family had opposed some obstacles; but now that she was out again, and that the weather permitted her to drive over to Blickling Park, she contrived to make her way there unaccompanied, and to take a long stroll in the shrubberies with a party staying in the house. Satisfied by the profound reverence of the Member's bow that she was still as great a favourite as ever, Mrs.

Martindale no sooner found herself, by one of the turns of the shrubbery, alone upon his arm, than she seized the opportunity to renew all her former declarations of relying solely and singularly upon his guidance in the direction of her own conduct; assuring him that "his superior wisdom could alone extricate her from a most unpleasant dilemma. It was impossible to place even Mr. Martindale in her confidence; for the delicate relation in which the offending parties stood towards him, might lead to the most unpleasant results." Mr. Blickling paused, and looked steadfastly and inquiringly at his fair companion, but said nothing. He was very much in the habit of saying nothing.

"During her recent indisposition," she resumed, "the families of the neighbourhood had been so kind as to show a great deal of attention to her sisters. They had been to as many dinner-parties, as many Christmas balls, as if she had not been confined to her room. Mrs. O'Callaghan had been kind enough to stay with her; but Julia and Harriet had been constantly out. Probably he had frequently met them?"

The Member bowed as to the Treasury Bench, but said nothing;—he was very much in the habit of saying nothing.

"All this, she was sorry to admit,—sorry for the sake of her own family, sorry for the sake of a respectable family in the neighbourhood,—had been productive of much mischief!"

Mr. Blickling started and stared. He even spoke; he cried "Indeed!" and much as Kean himself might have lingo-ed the word; and when his friend Mrs. Richard Martindale proceeded to unfold to him the agonized apprehensions entertained by Mrs John Cleverly of Poplar Lodge, and her own terror lest "any thing unpleasant" should happen during her sister's visit at Marygold Hill, he seemed quite as much shocked and alarmed as she could possibly desire. But, although she expressly asked his advice, and in her unwillingness to involve Martindale in a quarrel with his friend Jack, begged to know whether it was not plainly her duty to get rid of the indiscreet Mrs. Mac Glashun as quietly as possible, the great man of Blickling Park could not be induced to express a decided opinion. He shook his head, waved his hands, elevated his eyebrows, cleared his voice; and Mary-Matilda finally quitted the shrubbery under a persuasion that her platonic knight had advised her to do exactly what she had driven over to Blickling determined to effect; viz. to bring matters to a crisis by bringing all the parties concerned publicly together. It had always been a

Martindale custom to celebrate the christenings of the family by some showy festivity; and as she had done nothing since her arrival in the county to conciliate her neighbours, she now resolved to give a splendid ball and supper. This measure would serve to replace her in all her abdicated authority. An evening, at ten days distance, was fixed for the ceremony; and Mr. and Mrs. Blickling, who were already engaged to act as sponsors for the new little Hertfordshire Martindale, promised to dine and sleep at Marygold Hill. The rest of the company were simply invited for the evening.

Nothing makes people so popular in any neighbourhood as the act of giving a ball. Even Mrs. Richard Martindale, though in general very little liked, was now pronounced to be a good-natured, well-meaning woman in the main. Mrs. Cleverley forgot her domestic woes, Mrs. Marriot her filial mourning, the Ladies Mowbray their dignity, and the Mille-gans their aversion; nobody remembered any thing about Marygold Hill and its inhabitants, except that it was to be opened on the fourth of March, with a ball and supper, Weippert, and the Hatfield band. The Lieutenant General's widow and the Curate's wife contrived to coax poor Richard out of new white crape christening dresses; and Ned Warton who wished for nothing better than to see his friends in a scrape, looked upon the whole as a "ploy," and trusted that Mesdames Martindale and Cleverly, and as many of the gentlemen as possible, would make fools of themselves on the occasion.

The morning arrived, and the Blicklings (to whom Mrs. Trotter had volunteered to surrender her apartment) arrived also; and while poor Richard paraded the lady round his improvements and broke her shins over his patent castiron fences, his wife managed to get the County Member *tête-à-tête* into her book-room to relate to him all that had been going on since she saw him last. They sat opposite each other; Mrs. Richard with compressed lips, looking rigid, stern, and moral;—Blickling like the "Portrait of a Member of Parliament" in Somerset House exhibition, with his hand picturesquely resting on the writing table, and his legs crossed à la Knight Templar. Whenever Mrs. Martindale terminated a sentence in reprobation of the wickedness of the world, and more especially of married men who run after other men's wives or widows, the senator gravely uncrossed these impressive limbs, and (as if in mute reply to her appeal) re-

crossed them in an opposite direction. He was too cautious for words.

"Yes!—my dear Mr. Blickling,"—faltered Mary-Matilda in an under-tone; "you will, I am sure, sympathize with my feelings, when I acknowledge I have now more than ever reason to believe that villany has been going on under my roof. The other evening, after dusk, my own maid actually discovered a female in a white dress (it *could* be nobody but the ill-advised Mrs. Mac Glashun) clandestinely receiving a letter over the paling of the shrubbery from a gentleman on horseback, who *could* be nobody but that wretch Cleverly!"—

Mr. Blickling replied affirmatively by manœuvring his right leg over his left, and thus altering the balance of his whole attitude.

"Several times lately, the house-dogs have been heard to bark at undue hours; and I have every reason to believe that the alarm was given by these faithful creatures on account of strangers loitering about the premises to favour this vile—this detestable correspondence!"

Her auditor gravely and silently resumed his original position.

"To-night, however, I am determined to be on the alert, and so is poor dear Mrs. Cleverly. They will come early. The guilty parties will not entertain a suspicion that they are watched; and my eyes shall never be off their movements throughout the evening. It is a melancholy thing that the inquiry of mankind should compel one to have recourse to such precautions with one's own sister. But Julia so positively persists in denying the charge, that, without procuring distinct proof, I have no excuse for forbidding that vile fellow the house, and preserving the honour of my family."

Again the prim and prudish Blickling executed his favourite evolution; when, startled by a sudden burst of laughter at the bookroom window, both looked up, and perceived the blooming face of the widow Mac Glashun laughing under her gipsy-hat; while Ned Wharton stood by her side, with a countenance as malignantly significant as that of Vathek's Giaour. Mary-Matilda rose with ineffable dignity; and the County Member again uncrossed his legs, and was on them in a moment.

"Observe, my dear madam, the corrupt condition of modern society," said he sententiously, as he threw open the door into the saloon. "Such is the depraved state of those unfortunate

people's minds, that they are putting an evil construction on the innocent friendship existing between a woman so exemplary as you, a man so unsusceptible of immoral impressions as myself. Ah! madam!—ah! Mrs. Richard Martindale!—what is the world coming to!”

The evening arrived—the evening passed;—the eyes of Jack Cleverley's wife and Mrs. Mac Glashun's sister were carefully fixed upon the proceedings of the delinquents;—but nothing transpired. The little widow was certainly looking very handsome, and danced beautifully and with great animation; but, as Mr. Blickling observed aside to his fair friend, “If she flirted at all, it was clearly quite as much with that eccentric old humourist Warton as with the valiant Jack.” The ball passed off, as announced by the Hertford paper next morning, “with unexampled *eclat*.” Most of the county grandees were absent from indisposition. Weippert's music was supposed to have gone by the wrong coach, for it never made its appearance. The Argands would not burn. The white soup was sour, and the lobster sallad sweet. Still, for a country-ball, the thing went off tolerably. When a great number of young people meet together, and are willing to be amused, criticism is misplaced; and as Captain O'Callaghan had affronted the butler by volunteering to concoct the negus, and been consequently carried up to bed half an hour before the commencement of the ball, there was no person present of whom Mrs. Richards had any particular reason to feel ashamed.

To say the truth, the old or middle-aged people seemed quite as well amused at Marygold Hill as their juniors. Ned Warton was growing quite humanized, Richard Martindale was in the best of spirits, and the Blicklings themselves were so much gratified by the hospitality of their reception, that they actually proposed, of their own accord, to pass another day at Mrs. Martindale's seat. Mary-Matilda had the satisfaction, after breakfast next morning, of holding another jeremiad with the Member over the sinfulness of this corrupt generation, and of whispering to him that, notwithstanding all her vigilance of the night before, her own maid had detected the lady and gentleman stealing away together from the ball-room. Mr. Blickling shook his head, and was evidently much hurt that so much turpitude should exist under the same roof with himself and his family; but still he said nothing.

Mrs. Richard Martindale dwelt much on this flagrant

instance of his hypocrisy, when discussing the subject with her husband a few days afterwards, in consequence of a disgraceful discovery which had set Marygold Hill into consternation, and sent little Mrs. Trotter back in disgrace to the fens ;—besides very nearly driving the County Member from his seat, both in Herts and the House. Mrs. Trotter's had been the white dress in the shrubbery ; Mr. Blickling's the bay mare that stood so quiet beside the railings of the shrubbery. But Mrs. Mac Glashun had no leisure to upbraid either of her sisters with the aspersions thrown on her fair fame at Jack Cleverley's expense. Apprehensive of the coming storm and the demur it might occasion in her old beau's intentions, she was already off to Hertford in a post-chaise, with Edward Warton, Esq. and a special license !

“A pretty example have we set in the neighbourhood,” faltered poor Mrs. Richard, who was confined to her bed with genuine indisposition occasioned by this double shock. “In London this disgraceful affair would very soon blow over ; but I foresee no end to the tittle-tattle it will produce, happening at this season of the year, and at our Place in the Country !”—

CHAPTER VIII.

The park when purchased with disgust she sees,
And sighs for town, "Oh ! odious, odious trees !"

POPE.

AFTER all that had occurred, the Martindales had no longer any hesitation in informing the O'Callaghans, that it was their intention to go to town for a few weeks to be out of the way of their country neighbours ; and the captain, who had made himself mighty comfortable at Marygold Hill with his whisky toddy,—shooting his brother-in-law's pheasants, and laming his hunters,—now began to look big, and to talk about "the paltry upstartness of a new-bought place, compared with a fine ould ancient castle discinding from father to son from gineration to gineration." Poor Richard, who was all philanthropy, contrived, however, to get rid of him without a quarrel, by paying his way back again to Connemara, *via* Holyhead. The head nurse came back ; and Marygold was itself again. To remain there, however, was impossible. Mrs. Martindale felt that she had not the courage to encounter the hearty laugh of the Cleverleys, the sneers of the Marriots, or to pass in her daily drives the accusing lodge-gates of Blickling Park. It had been understood, and promised, indeed, on the purchase of the fatal place in the country, that she was to go to town for the season when she pleased,—every spring if it suited her,—either to an hotel or a ready furnished house. Recollections of the miseries of removal had hitherto alone prevented her from exercising the right ; but now, she was ready and willing to occupy a comfortable furnished house engaged for her by her good-natured husband in Queen Anne Street. She longed to be once more

within reach of the Kedgerees and Calicuts, and all her former dinner-giving friends and acquaintance.

Numerous, indeed, are the mortifications which await a country family arriving, after some years' absence, in town for the season. They find themselves out of fashion,—behind the time,—eclipsed,—disparaged,—forgotten by many, and even deliberately cut by a few. Mrs. Richard, in addition to the discovery that her own wardrobe and that of her children must be re-modelled, had the mortification of discovering that Lady Kedgerree had already acquired another bosom friend to gossip with in her stead; and that Mrs. Calicut was quite as intimate with her successor in the Harley-street-house, as she had ever been with herself. Richard, meanwhile, on coming home every day from his solicitor's, where he had now three lawsuits in progress connected with the Marygold Hill estate, (one concerning a flaw in the title; another for having closed up a foot-path, and a third, for an action for trespass,) no longer made any secret of the superior attraction he discovered in a metropolis so rich in clubs, and so adapted to the habits of a lounge. He was now approaching his sixtieth year; it was necessary that Master Grinderwell should go to Eton; "and when the lad is at school," said he, in a desponding tone, "what on earth shall I have to amuse me at Marygold Hill? My hunting days are gone by;—that impudent fellow, O'Callaghan, has thinned all my preserves;—I make but a poor hand at farming;—and altogether, I feel that the country is no place for me. Besides, it requires an immense fortune to live like a gentleman on one's own estate; and what with the five-and-forty thousand pounds so rashly sunk in the purchase, and the ten thousand I have frittered away, hundred by hundred, since I married—my circumstances are becoming considerably embarrassed. As my poor brother's partner, Latitat, says, 'unless I can make the Marygold estate yield somewhat of a more profitable return, I may look upon myself as a ruined man.'"

"No man can press oil out of a stone," says the Italian proverb; and Richard found to his cost, that it was impossible to extract a profitable return from a fancy-place, consisting of lawn, shrubbery, paddock and woodlands in their nonage. His brother Robert's successor, however, who had a keen eye for speculation, had the good luck to discover an excellent stratum of brick earth on the estate; and accordingly, by

the time Mary-Matilda had blushed her last blushes for the delinquencies of her two sisters and made up her mind to return home, she had the satisfaction of finding the only picturesque point of the grounds disfigured by kilns and littered by brick straw, and the whole atmosphere, the "precious country air" she had sacrificed so much to secure for her children, foully impregnated with hydro-sulphuretted gas. Poor Richard assured her, that the success of his brick-kiln could alone redeem him from the difficulties into which he had been plunged by his rash purchase of the estate; and at length compromised the matter by undertaking to build her a splendid new steam-conservatory round the basement story of the house, capable of removing all the bad effects of the gas.

Mrs. Richard had ample need for this little smoothing down of her ruffled pride. During her spring in town, the Marriots had been busy turning their sixty thousand pounds to account, in making magnificent improvements, and re-furnishing Starling Park. Thanks to the models afforded them at Mowbray End, the mansion was completed in the best taste; and, as Clotilda admitted to her aunt, while parading her through every room in the house from the attics to the housekeeper's room, "they really flattered themselves it was the most perfect thing in that part of the country."—Mrs. Martindale thought of the two thousand pounds settled by poor Richard on his nephew, to insure him a college education, and wondered when *she* should be able to have a white marble bath in her dressing-room, or lace trimmings to her muslin curtains.

With her own family, meanwhile, Mrs. Richard had resigned all intercourse. Sir Joseph Grinderwell affected to resent her negligence as the origin of his sister's indiscretion; and her younger brothers were eating government bread in different parts of the globe;—one as a resident in Newfoundland, one as a consul in Cochin-China, and one thirty feet below the level of the Thames, as clerk in a frog-trap at Somerset House. She had no one to quarrel with, no one to molest;—even the humble Jacob Martindale treated her with that frigid deference which forbids all approach to familiarity; and Mary-Matilda, who had been so lively at Grinderwell House, so merry at Cheltenham, so happy in Wales, so contented at Bath, so dissipated at Weymouth, so courted in Harley-street, discovered that in the country, to which she had restricted the remainder of her days, she was likely to be dull, dispirited, despised, and

lonely. It was very little consolation to her to feel that she was proprietress of a place in the country, now that her means no longer permitted her to enliven it with entertainments, fill it with company, and assume a leading part in the neighbourhood. She took it into her head they were designated all over the county as "the Martindales of the Brickfield;" while the more moral circles probably pointed her out to abhorrence, as a member of that obliquitous family which had induced the County Member into backsliding.

"Ah, Richard!" she exclaimed, when another winter was about to set in, and they had not so much as the O'Callaghans at their disposal to assist them in making war against the long evenings and snowy mornings, "I shall never forgive you for having made me renounce that comfortable Harley-street house for this desolate place. To live as we did there, forms the utmost limit of my desires;—good establishment, pleasant dinner parties, winter at Brighton, summer at Hastings;—the children always well, the servants always happy;—the Kedgerees, the Calicuts, and poor dear Camphor the apothecary within a stone's throw.—It really was madness on *your* part to set your heart upon a country life. You are not fit for it, my dear, you are really not fit for it.—You cannot do without your club; or your morning's lounge with Sir Hookah Smith and Sir Brown Kedgerree. I wish to Heaven I had been as well aware when you took this place, as I am now, of your inaptitude for rural pleasures; nothing should have induced me to allow you to bury us for life, in order that you might gratify the pride of the Martindale family by purchasing a place in their native county. There are the poor girls, who will soon be wanting masters, and who will be brought up mere *Hottentots* (I beg your pardon,—believe me, I intended no allusion to your early avocations,) and turn out perhaps vulgar fine ladies, like your niece Clotilda."

"Or worse, like *your* two flirting sisters," might have burst from the lips of a man less mildly quiescent than the patient Richard. *He* however, contented himself with observing, "Well my love, we must hope for the best. Your mother may perhaps take it into her head to leave enough to enable you to make a little visit to town every spring; or perhaps—"

"A letter by express, Sir," said the footman, placing a voluminous despatch in the hands of Mr. Martindale, and quitting the room.

"What is it, what is it?"—cried his wife, breathless with consternation. "Is it any thing from little Grindewell?—any thing from Eton?"—

"No."

"Any thing regarding my sisters?"

"No."

"In a word are the tidings good or bad?—your banker, your agent?"

"I hardly know whether to call them good *or* bad," said Richard, much perplexed; "for you women are so confoundedly capricious, that one can never anticipate on what opinion you may finally anchor."

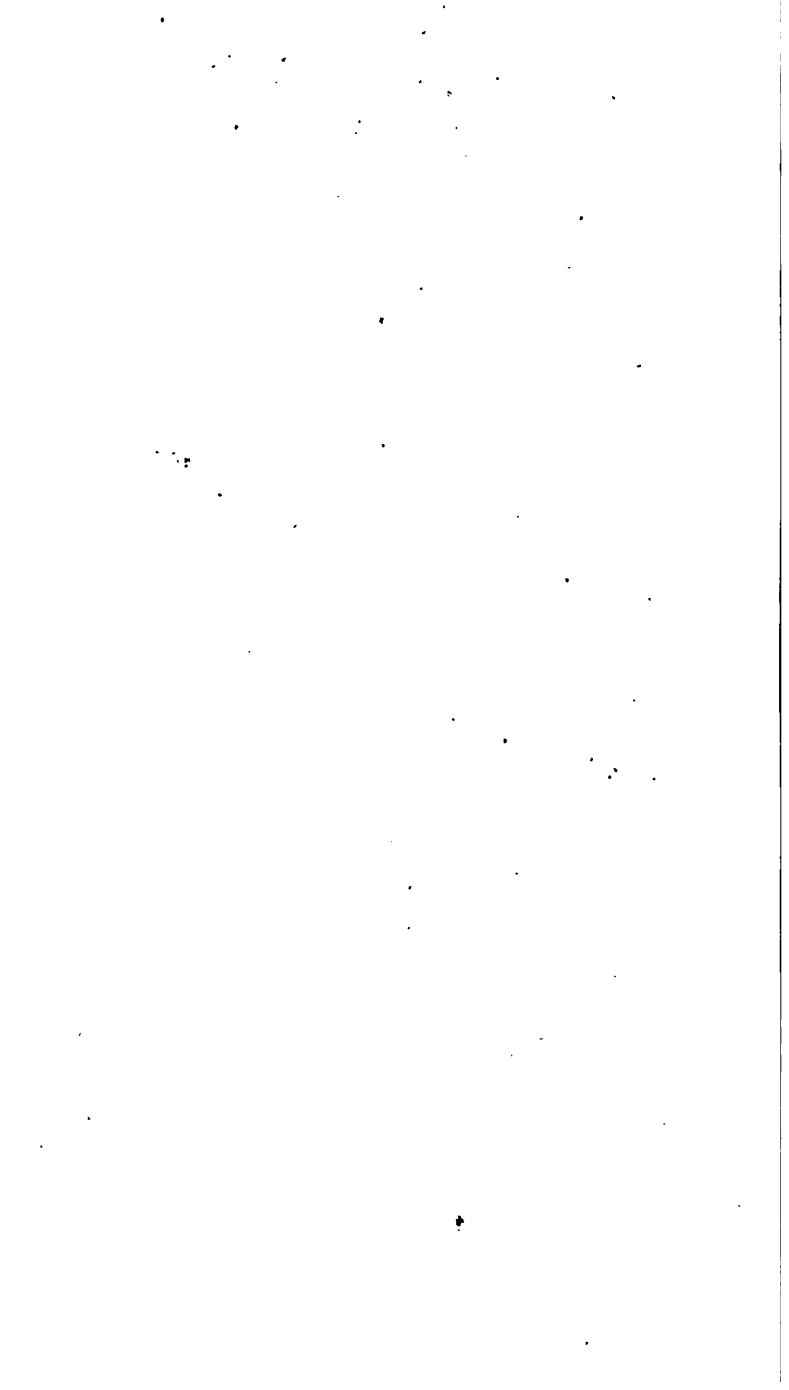
"For Heaven's sake, do not prose so when I am dying with curiosity. Give me the letter!"

"Tell me first;" said Martindale, grown cunning with experience and placing the folded epistle carefully in his pocket, "tell me first, candidly and explicitly, *do* you repent having purchased Marygold Hill;—and would you, if you could, return to the freedom of a London life?"

"That I would!"—ejaculated Mrs. Richard, firmly believing such a release to be beyond her husband's power.—"If we could but get rid of this estate, I should be the happiest woman in the world."

"I give you joy then, my dear Mary-Matilda," continued he drily. "Latitat informs me that we have lost our suit.—The title cannot be made good; and after all, Marygold Hill returns to the possession of its lawful owner. I shall be a loser to the amount of some thousands by the money I have expended on the improvements; in consideration of which, the adverse party have very liberally offered me a long lease of the place on easy terms; and should you feel any reluctance in quitting it—"

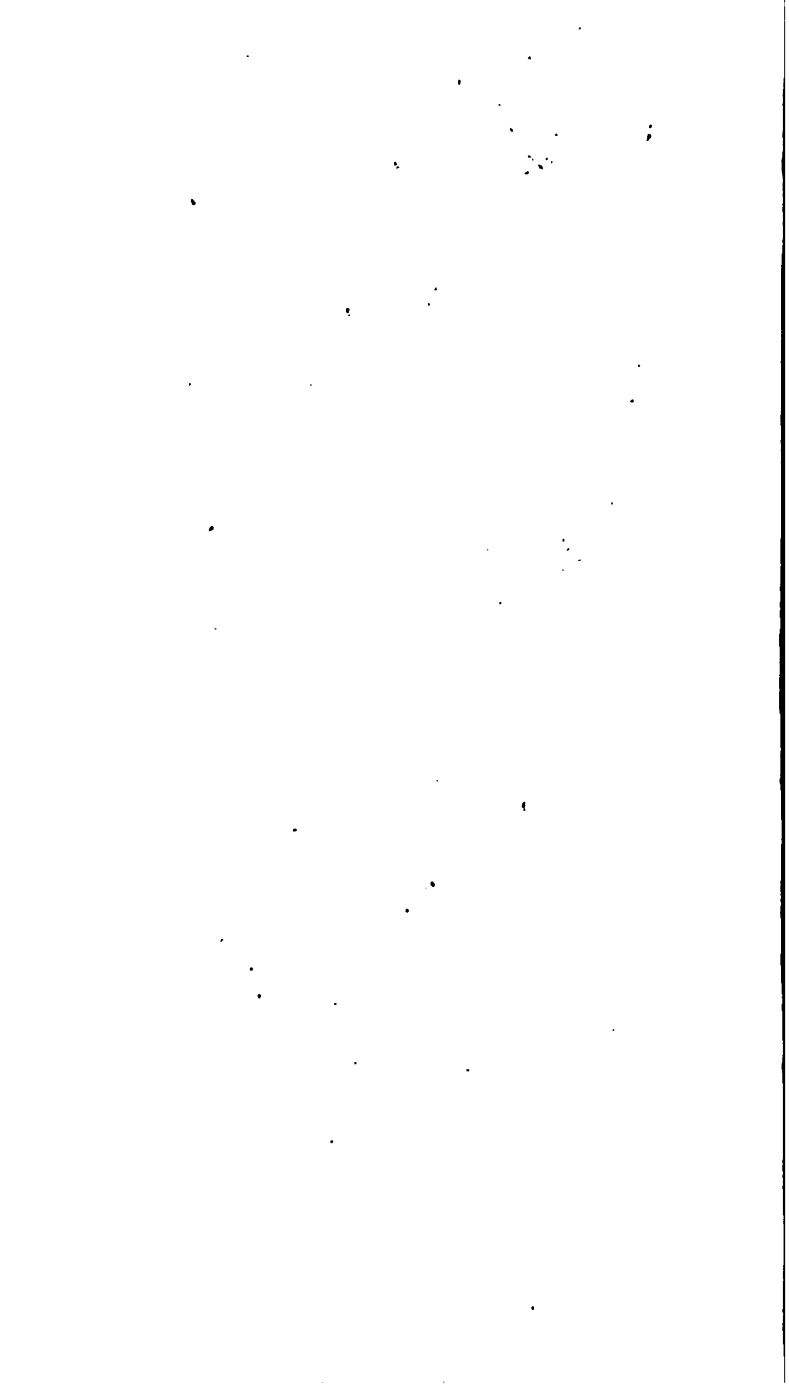
"No, no, no,!" cried Mrs. Martindale. "Pray let us return to the mode of life for which we were born, and which suits us best. I have had quite enough of Marygold Hill.—Believe me, I have lost all predilection for ———— a PLACE IN THE COUNTRY."



THE PAVILION.

I would, if possible, represent the errors of life in such a manner as that people of pleasure may read me. In this case I must not be rough to ladies and gentlemen ; but speak of sin as a gentleman.

STEEL.



CHAPTER I.

No person, who possesses either piety, grace, or good manners, will use such jests as are bitter, poisoned, injurious, or which in any way leave a sting behind them. BURTON.

A vice has been gaining ground of late years among the higher orders of English society, which, although it may not strictly fall under the interdiction of the Decalogue, is unquestionably at variance with the spirit of every Christian principle, and every moral law. It seems admitted that, couched in a tone of irony, the grossest insults may be offered; that, under the palliative name of quizzing, any species of impertinence may be inflicted; and that, provided a sneer be unaccompanied by a menace or a blow, it must be received with good humour. Many a person welcomes, as an evidence of wit, the reputation of being "very satirical," who would shrink from the imputation of that "scorn of the scorner," pointed out in Holy Writ as one of the most abundant fountains of human bitterness.

"In one of those admirable letters in the *"Heart of Mid Lothian,"* whereby Scott practically demonstrates the progress of corruption which has transformed the selfish Effie Deans into the heartless Lady Staunton, she is made to allude to the hollow tone of fashionable irony, as "*the drolling style of conversation now in vogue.*" But from the bantering of the reign of George II., to the mockery of that of William IV., how gigantic and lamentable the progress! —Irony is now the favourite and universal figure of speech! The bar, the senate, the drawing-room, nay even the social fire side, is embittered by the caustic personalities of sneering wit; and of all cotemporary writers, Sir Walter alone

has disdained to enliven his pages with its flippancy, or adorn them with its false glitter. Even in their intercourse with each other,—“I pray thee do not mock me, fellow student,”—is a prayer that falls as naturally from the lips of the modern “men of wit and fashion about town,” as from those of the Prince of Denmark himself.

But it is chiefly in fashionable society that the art of quizzing forms so important an accomplishment; and a total want of *bonne foi*, such as the practice necessarily produces, is a characteristic of the great world of London peculiarly striking to foreigners. They are amazed to observe that a fact narrated at some distinguished dinner-table, is received with a wonderful allowance for “errors excepted;” that Lord A—— listens to his friend Lord B——, with a smile of polite incredulity; and that, ever on the watch against being quizzed by an ironical compliment or rendered ridiculous as the subject of a hoax, the belle of St. James’s receives as an injury, the same courteous salutations which a belle of the *Chaussée d’Antin* claims as a right! It is, now, in short, admitted, that John Bull, our national impersonator, heretofore represented as endowed with the moral swallow of a whale and digestion of an ostrich,—as a speaker of matter of fact, and a hearer of matter of fact,—has become a mere strainer at gnats,—a *doctrinaire* in creed and cant,—a scandal-monger pre-eminently addicted to frivolous and vexatious bantering and backbiting!—Under the influence of the smiles and blandishments of the Exclusives, honest John has even been betrayed in his dotage into sneering at those who will not join with him in abjuring the simplicity of life and manners which he has recently learned to reprobate as an evidence of national barbarism.

“Who or what is this new Prussian ambassadress?” inquired Lady Mary Milford of the Honourable Frederick Fitzgerald, as they stood together in the tea-room at Almack’s at the close of the last ball of the season, waiting for the announcement of her carriage.

“Is it possible that you do not know?—The original of Goethe’s Charlotte! Old Reppenheim fell in love with her as she was cutting bread-and-butter for her little brothers and sisters, at some presbytery in Lithuania; and, instead of renouncing the charming simplicity of character which she considers the origin of her promotion, she still sticks a moss-rose in her flaxen wig,—quotes Hermann and Dorothea; and Clanhenry protests that she actually appeared at Court,

last winter at Berlin, leading a lamb, *en lisière*, with a blue riband."

"Nonsense! There is no believing a word you say. I have not forgotten your persuading me that Lady Charlemore was the authoress of the Waverly novels. But really this Countess Reppenheim promises to be *impayable*. Sophia tells me that she went out fishing with the king on the Virginia Water, after her audience of reception at Windsor, and inquired of his Majesty, in a tender whisper, whether he ever bestowed a tear on the memory of '*Cette belle Robinson, si intéressante par ses grâces et par ses malheurs*?'"

"And by way of illustrating the adage, '*Ne faut point parler de corde dans la maison d'un pendu*,' passed a whole hour to-night in torturing our friend, Lady Grasmere, with a dissertation on the pleasures of a rustic life; forgetting that our English Viscountess is the daughter of an Irish farmer, reared upon bite-and-sup, and highly accomplished in the manufacture of Eddish cheese!"

"A most unsophisticated individual indeed! Well, well; a season in London will scarcely fail to endow her with the right use of her eyes, ears, and understanding. I can almost forgive her *bévue*, however, in the Grasmere affair. How is it possible for foreigners to be forewarned against the extraordinary instances of *mésalliance* which betray them, in this country, into the society of *parvenues* of every description; actresses, opera dancers, farmer's daughters,—all sorts and conditions of women. Far be it from me to blame the system which keeps our brothers and uncles (the cadets of the family) out of bedlam or the workhouse. But it is not surprising that a person like the Countess Reppenheim, qualified by her sixteen quarterings to enter any Chapter of the empire, should find it impossible to give credit to the existence of such degradation."

"Ay, ay! we'll teach her to 'think deep ere she depart.' We must improve her morals by familiarising her with the majesty of the people, and the equality of the human race."

"*C'est pour rire!* You, who are the greatest aristocrat unguillotined!"

"Am I?—Only during the lifetime of my old aunt, the Duchess of Keswycke, whose acres, thank Heaven, are as loose as her principles are fixed. I intend her to make me her heir; and there is no pleasing the doting widow of a Duke of twenty descents, without pinning a little faith upon the legends of Domesday Book. She has fifteen other needy

nephews on the watch for her inheritance ; and I am obliged to put my best leg forward—”

“ To convince her how well it would become the Garter! —Well!—we must get Countess Reppenheim presented to her Grace ; to prove to the wife of this Silesian magnifico, that we really *have* a peeress or two whose grandfathers kept no chandler’s shop ; and whose prejudices are as chivalrous and feudal as her own.”

Such was “ the drolling style ” in which one of the gentlest, purest, and most amiable of human beings was discussed among the fashionables of the metropolis in which her lord was appointed to fill the honourable post of ambassador. - Countess Reppenheim was scarcely thirty years of age ; but the delicacy of her health had invested her with the tone and aspect of a somewhat more advanced epoch. She was secured, however, from that besetting sin of coquetry which usually characterizes a foreign fashionable in the wane of her charms, by strong attachment to her husband, no less than by personal indolence and constitutional infirmity. She seemed to have been, or to be on the point of becoming a beauty. But something was deficient : either vivacity, or vigour, or intelligence ; or some one among the nameless nothings indispensable to female fascination. The women called her faded,—the men, languid ;—but all were of opinion that she need only exert herself,—devote a little more care to her dress, and a little more animation to her manner, to be as captivating as the *most* captivating of her sex.

The Countess had, in fact, been reared in a school which, instead of initiating her into the arcanæ of that hateful science called “ knowledge of the world,” had involved her in scenes of such stirring and unprecedented anxiety and excitement as could not fail to produce a lasting injury to her naturally frail constitution ; as well as to impart to her character a tone of sentiment and romance, fatal to her success on that hollow stage of irony, the supreme *bon ton* of London. At a very early age the Baroness Helene von Edelstein was nominated Maid of Honour to the beautiful and unfortunate Louisa Queen of Prussia ; had witnessed her bitter trials, her patient resignation, her untimely death. One of the last actions of the royal sufferer had been to bestow the hand of her favourite on Count Reppenheim ; and instead of the origin assigned by the fashionable and sneering Clanhenry for the alliance, it had been the favourite

project of a dying queen. Scarcely, however, had the tears of the young Countess ceased to flow for the loss of her beloved mistress, when Reppenheim's appointment to a high command in that army of the Elbe to which the name of the queen afforded a rallying cry of vengeance, filled her with consternation. Instantly retiring from court, she made it at once a pleasure and a duty to pass the period of his absence in strict seclusion on his family estates; and thus the woman who, from early courtiership and late, might have been supposed a fair match for the intrigues of Carlton House or the affectations of Almack's, still retained the primeval simplicity and good faith of childhood. Four years indeed had elapsed since the battle of Waterloo secured the pacification of Europe, and caused the palaces of the continent to ring for joy. But they had been passed by the Count and the Countess in comparative obscurity on their Silesian estates; and the new ambadress now made her appearance in London, having imbibed all her notions of English frankness and English hospitality from the national vaunts circulated in books of the last century; and prepared to interpret *au pied de la lettre* all she saw and all she heard in moral London. She would as soon have expected to find a scorpion hidden under the leaves of a garden rose, as that the languor of her air and the graciousness of her manners could be made a matter of ridicule among those who met her with such eager invitations and overtures of friendship.

Had it been the commencement instead of the close of the season when the Reppenheims arrived in town, a single week's experience would have sufficed to place the Countess in the current of the vortex. But unfortunately, July and the last lingerers of the *beau monde* were taking their departure together. The closely-shuttered mansions of Grosvenor-square were already uninhabited; saving by the ancient porter who sat, spectacles on nose, at the hall window, with one eye on the radiant blossoms of a pot of French marigolds, and the other on a well-thumbed copy of the Court Guide,—the literary vade mecum of his vocation. Not an equipage was to be seen in the streets, but those of a few sal-low apothecaries and physicians; who, exhausted by the labours of the season, looked like the ghosts of their own patients escaped from the Styx. The gay haberdashers' shops of Regent-street stood stripped of their festoons of ribbon, during the annual migration of Mr. and Mrs. Taffeta to Margate; long melancholy strings of hackney coaches,

like funeral processions of departed business, ruralized certain commercial streets by the litter of their hay and straw; while in Cumberland-place and the Squares, a luxuriant crop of after grass was running to seed. The West End "smelt wooingly"—of mellow apples, and sounded hollow as the brazen gates of a giant's portal in a pantomime.

The moment was doubtless unpropitious for the advent of a foreigner; and right glad was the Countess to take refuge in a damp diplomatic villa on the banks of the Thames, bequeathed to the tenancy of the ambassador by the excellency his predecessor.

"I grieve to leave you in this dull place," said Lady Beaulieu, the popular wife of the foreign secretary, (who had become slightly acquainted with Countess Reppenheim during the Aix la Chapelle negotiations,) on taking leave of her for the season. "I am, however, scarcely in a more enviable position than yourself; for Beaulieu and I are going on a conciliation pilgrimage to our Irish estates, and I have no hope of seeing you till we meet at Brighton in the winter."

Unfortunately it did not occur to Lady Beaulieu that the new ambadress could require, in the interim, any hints for her guidance in the choice or formation of her society. She forgot that, although London is nominally a wilderness during the parliamentary recess, a few stray dandies are always to be found, who would be brought down to dinner by the *attachés* and secretaries, to quiz the simplicity of their noble hostess, and circulate reports of the rusticity of an ambadress who actually exerted herself to render her house agreeable; and who exposed herself to still more poignant ridicule by respectful attention to a husband many years older than herself. Neither was her ladyship aware that a certain Lady Grasmere, who inhabited a neighbouring villa during the autumn months, had been already presented to the Countess; and would present, in her turn, other persons and personages equally ineligible. Nay, even had Lady Beaulieu been forewarned of these impending dangers, it may be doubted whether, with all her tact and good breeding and good humour, her ladyship's own mind was sufficiently schooled in the philosophy of fashion to enable her to set forth the worst features of the case.

But had it been possible for the blue-eyed goddess of the Grecian bard to have arrayed herself (instead of the venerable front and solemn tunic of Nestor) in the flowing satin and flowing ringlets of a patroness of Almack's, she would

probably have whispered to the fair Prussian who sat contemplating the weeping-willows and aguish lawn of Maple Villa, in the persuasion, like Pope Gregory's of old, that Britain is peopled with angels, "Of all the capitals of Europe London is the place where the forms of society are loosest in definition and strictest in observation. The slightest infraction of the arbitrary code of conventional law is fatal to the convicted culprits; and not the most pitiful little court of ceremonious Germany is half so scrupulous in the exaction of its etiquettes and the infliction of its penalties. In the *beau-monde* of May-fair, court any infamy rather than that of ridicule. Instead of the lambent flame which, in foreign society, sports alike innocuous round the head of the lance or the point of the fan, you will find the *persiflage* of the English a scorching and corroding fire, eating into your heart and bequeathing an ineffaceable scar. Be vile,—be prodigal,—be false,—but do not make yourself ridiculous. A butt or bore ranks with the worst of criminals. Believe only half you hear; say only half you think; do nothing you are asked; and in process of time you may achieve a tolerable degree of credit and popularity in fashionable society."

CHAPTER II.

There are no persons so solicitous about the preservation of rank as those who have no rank at all. SHENSTONE.

THE Dowager Viscountess Grasmere, described by the two maligners of the Almack's tea room as "an Irish farmer's daughter," was in fact the offspring of a man of decayed fortune in a remote part of Connaught; who, officiating as bailiff to the late Viscount her husband, had ended with becoming his father-in-law. It would be difficult to conceive any thing more dazzling than the beauty which effected this singular transition. Eleanor Cavanagh was tall, finely formed, uniting a countenance of the antique character, with a complexion of that pure poetical paleness which nothing but fine features can embellish, but which so well becomes their delicate chiselling. She was unquestionably one of the loveliest women in the kingdom.

Lord Grasmere, ever on the watch against provoking the sneers of society, had sedulously avoided collision with the London world till a prolonged residence on the continent, and the influence of society at Lausanne, Florence, and Rome, had tamed down his wild Irish girl into the soft, feminine, and dignified woman which his widow at the age of five-and-twenty was universally pronounced to be. A jointure of eight thousand *per annum* was perhaps the chief accomplishment that drew to her feet the homage of hosts of lordlings, dandyings and needy honourables; but it could only be the charms of her manners and the merits of her character which attracted the friendship of so many distinguished individuals of her own sex. Lady Grasmere was not, however, what in London is termed "the fashion." When she en-

tered a ball-room, no knot of impotent loungers gathered round to listen to her *bon mots*, or amuse themselves with her blushes; no cortege of dashing *vauriens* followed her horse as she took her daily airing in Rottenrow; or planted their kid gloves on the edge of her britschka as she jogged up and down the drive, swallowing the dust and their glaring adulation. She gave her name to no new footstool—no fashionable bonnet;—nor was her opera-box a levelling mark for the glasses of the gallant, the gay, and the presuming. But she had achieved something far beyond all this.—Her society consisted of young and lovely women, unbreathed on by the venomous lips of scandal; of agreeable and high-bred men, who knew how to unite the spirit and graces of their age, without slang,—without finery,—without undue assumption of any kind. A few of a still more distinguished order were sprinkled among the group,—a few leading politicians and men of letters, but not in sufficient numbers to provoke against her little circle the anathema of being a *bureau d'esprit*. Now and then, indeed, a dandy lord or fashionable libertine would force his way into the coterie, to prefer his suit and receive a gentle dismissal; and it was this latter circumstance alone, which provoked the Exclusives to set forth in loud and angry terms that Lady Grasmere “was not one of *them*.” They could not, however, succeed in stigmatising her as any thing she ought not to be. By her position in the world, Lady Grasmere was eminently qualified to form a centre of attraction to a social circle;—young, fair, free, rich, virtuous, good-tempered,—she was not sufficiently secure on the pedestal of fashion to admit of trifling with her own dignity. Unsupported by high personal connexion, she was aware that pretension, or dulness, or indiscretion, or eccentricity, would suffice to provoke inquiry and impute the blame of all her errors to the obscurity of her birth. She saw that she must not venture out of her depth;—but she also saw that there was ample space within given distance of the shore, for the gratification of her future life, without self-sacrifice or danger. Her house, instead of being extravagantly or gorgeously brilliant, was furnished with studied simplicity. Her equipage was plain,—her establishment remarkable only for its regularity and propriety; but there was a tone of elegance pervading the whole, that spoke wonders for the taste and tact of the owner;—and Lady Grasmere gratified herself with the certainty that (her Cavanaghship apart) there was nothing the least

quizzible in herself or her appertainments. For three years previous to the arrival of the Countess she had assumed that distinguished part in London life which merit of any kind is sure to command from the unbribable jury of its coteries;—had refused more offers than half the heiresses or beauties of the day;—and it was a sole drawback to her satisfaction that there was still a lofty sect which looked down with contempt upon her excellencies, and persisted in waving a flag of triumph over her head.

Such was the woman assigned by chance to Countess Reppenheim, on her arrival in town, as her “glass of fashion and mould of form.” Unsuspicious that the extreme *retenu* of Lady Grasmere’s manners and conduct arose from the constant fear of committing herself by dereliction from the usages of society, the Ambassadors could not contemplate without admiration the modest graces of the English neighbour who exerted herself so hospitably for her amusement. Accustomed in other countries to find none but the highly born and highly bred established in the circles of the great world, it never occurred to her to suspect *roture* in a head adorned with a coronet. To Lady Grasmere, accordingly, she addressed herself for information on all doubtful points connected with her new honours or the forms of society;—and nothing could be more injudicious than her choice of a Mentor. Although fully adequate to maintain her own station in life, her ladyship both was, and felt herself to be, incompetent to the perplexities of courtly etiquette. But she did not possess sufficient dignity of mind and strength of character to confess the truth, and admit her own deficiencies of birth and education. Preferring Countess Reppenheim to the whole host of her female friends, and aware of the marvellous extent of German prejudices on the chapter of pedigree, there was nothing she more apprehended than that some of the light, gaudy, but venomous insects fluttering in society, should buzz into the ear of the ambassador the secret of her insignificance; and it was part in the hope of forestalling the report, that Lady Grasmere, for the first time, began to affect a certain supercilious fastidiousness respecting men and things, very foreign to the usual amiability of her demeanour.

There is nothing more vulgar among the sins of social life than what is termed *finery*. It is, in fact, a distinguishing mark of *absence* of caste; for what can a person *really* distinguished by birth or merit gain by presumptuous dispar-

agement of the rest of the human race? It is the policy of the eminent to *elevate* the claims of those beneath them, in order that by raising the standard of comparison, their own superiority may attain yet higher distinction; and the moment a man or woman affects to be *fine*,—to shrink from contact with any but the elect, and to raise a glass of inquiry to the unknown physiognomies of plebeian life, it is to be inferred that “something is rotten in the state of Denmark;” that so studious an arrangement of the folds of the velvet mantle and ermined robes purports the concealment of some gash or blemish beneath, known only to the wearer.

Among the idlers at Lady Grasmere’s villa, and pretendants to her favour, from whom, in the course of the autumn, the Countess unconsciously and unfortunately imbibed her notions of the character of an English gentleman, were Mr. Fitzgerald, the satirical hero already introduced to the reader, and a certain “fat,” dark, and “forty” dandy, named Lord Clanhenry;—the former a budding, the latter a full-blown exquisite;—the former professing good looks, the latter good manners;—the former insinuating himself to be the idol of the sex, the latter the Coryphæus of the clubs;—the former the unresisting victim of the vortex—oppressed with balls, bewildered with dinner invitations, beguiled into water-parties, tormented into picnics, and on severe duty as a Park escort and caller of carriages;—the latter, still more *recherché* (having escaped the impertinence of similar importunities, and outlived the ardour of popularity,) a veteran of the war of society—medalled, promoted, pensioned—a Field Marshal of the fashion-list of his Majesty’s dandies! Both were favoured courtiers at Carlton-house, and reaped in general society the full advantage of that empty distinction.

The main difference, however, between the two lay deep beneath the surface. Both were poor, both fortune-hunters; but the handsome Frederick ~~was~~ a young brother, who had never had a shilling in his life; and the well-bred Clanhenry, a spendthrift, who had not a shilling *left*. Frederick accordingly strove to impress on the mind of the richly-jointed dowager that, although courted by the world, he resigned it all for *her*; while his lordship assumed still higher ground, and insinuated that the fervour of his devotion ought to determine her to resign all the world for *him*. Both were eminently *fine*; Fitzgerald from the consciousness of being deficient in every thing but a tolerable exterior; Clanhenry, from knowing that the dilapidated state of his finances had

betrayed him into various acts of meanness, or what, in any but a man of many clubs and universal acceptance, would be termed dishonesty. It required a considerable proportion of that self-possession patricianly denominated "knowledge of the world" and plebeianly termed "impudence," to carry them in safety through the shallow waters in which they were compelled to navigate.

Now Lord Clanhenry and Fred. Fitzgerald (for although in some cases youth and good looks impart consideration, it is but just to give precedency to the peer), were equally though secretly of opinion, that it would have been more for their interest had Lady Grasmere's new friend continued to air her little Pomeranian lap-dog *unter den Linden* of Berlin, instead of among the sooty elms of Hyde Park. Their tactics were disconcerted by the straightforward simplicity of her character. She was in the habit of asking plain questions, which they found it very difficult to answer; and of giving a literal interpretation to their sayings, such as their doings were ill calculated to justify. There was no knowing how to dispose of such a woman. Her rank, fortune, unblemished reputation, and official dignity, rendered it impossible to decry her in society. The only alternative was to impugn her authority in the eyes of Lady Grasmere, by betraying her into breaches of etiquette and violations of English notions of propriety, and then quizzing her into disrepute. Each, unavowedly to the other, accordingly commenced his system of operations by insinuating to the idle babblers, their companions (the Lady Grandisons and Lady Mary Milfords), that the simplicity of the new ambassadress was the simplicity of mere folly, and her credulous good nature the fruit of mental imbecility. In a very short time people began to take advantage of these imputed defects, by addressing her with exaggerated civilities, and filling her mind with groundless notions of English Eccentricity. It is true she had not readiness of tact to detect the imposture; but it afforded no evidence of folly that, finding herself suddenly introduced into the society of a foreign nation, she respected its usages, however absurd; and reflected in respectful silence on the peculiarities to which she was required to conform, and which were pointed out to her by persons of seeming respectability and real distinction.

CHAPTER III

Soft creeping, cups on cups, the feast compose ;
 At every pause they stretch, they yawn, they dose ;
 And now to this side, now to that they nod,
 As black or green infuse the drowsy god. DUNCIAD.

THE first experience of the Countess in the pleasures and penalties of fashionable life in the most hospitable country in Europe, occurred at Brighton ; where, in compliance with the custom introduced by the Prince Regent, the *beau monde* of that epoch made it a point of conscience to pass a shivering Christmas.

" I do not much like travelling at this season of the year," observed the Countess to Lord Clanhenry, a few days previous to her departure for the coast. " But it appears that it is no longer the fashion to settle in London for the winter till April or May ; and I do not wish to make myself particular."

" Quite right !—Were it known that the Prussian minister remained in town during the holidays, it would induce a general suspicion that he was on less than the best terms with the court."

" *Du reste*" replied the Countess, wrapping herself up still closer in her Cashmere, " it does not much signify. Wherever one goes in England, comforts of every kind await and attend one. Mr. Fitzgerald assures me that in the poorest hovel they pique themselves on the luxury of carpets and curtains ; and my *maître d'hôtel* writes me word that he has engaged me one of the best houses in Brighton."

One of the best lodging-houses in Brighton, in the year 1819, was not perhaps quite equal to the worst of the year

1833; and poor Madame Reppenheim's notions of English "comfort" were considerably puzzled by creaking stairs, smoky chimnies, doors that would not close, and windows that would not open; besides a host of minor deficiencies, all of which were maliciously ascribed by her evil genii, Clanhenry and Fitzgerald, to "*les habitudes du pays*". Unwilling to condemn what appeared so satisfactory to the rest of the nation, the Countess accordingly pronounced herself to be extremely well lodged; politely ascribed a severe cold caught on settling in her "comfortable" house to the influence of the sea air; and an attack of ophthalmia, proceeding from her smoky dressing-room, to the misfortune of having been accustomed to stoves. Lady Grasmere being unable to visit Brighton during the first ten days of her stay, she was more than ever open to the mischievous influence of her two enemies.

"I have received an invitation from your relation the Duchess of Keswycke," said the Countess to Fitzgerald, a few days after her arrival. "Her card specifies that it is a very small early party. What does that mean?"

"That you must go at eight o'clock, in a morning costume. Her Grace is a very old-fashioned personage, and hates anything like ostentation."

In pursuance of this advice, the ambassadress in an elegant demie-toilette (to which a bonnet imparted the decided character of a morning dress), made her appearance just half an hour after the guests of the Duchess of Keswycke, in their satin gowns and diamond necklaces, were sitting down to dinner. Vexed and mortified to find herself so thoroughly *deplacée*,—for by a mistake of the servants she was ushered into the dining-room,—the Countess noticed that the members of the small early party arrived at ten o'clock; and when, two nights afterwards, she received a formal card from Lady Grandison to the same effect, she resolved to put in practice the hints she had received from Lord Clanhenry on the subject of English dress and English hours. Mistaking reverse of wrong for right, she made her appearance on this occasion between ten and eleven o'clock, radiant with jewels; and nothing could exceed the contemptuous surprise with which she found herself surveyed by the half dozen old women congregated round a solitary whist-table, their chairs and carriages having been already announced for departure. Sir Carmichael Domdaniel, the veteran beau of the antiquated coterie, had the satisfaction of enlarging the following morning on

the tale of the Countess's ill-timed splendours, at full fifty houses in Brighton, wherein he enacted the part of Court Circular.

"I fear I shall never understand your habits!" cried she in a desponding tone to Lady Grasmere, on her arrival from town. "Even your friends Clanhenry and Fitzgerald, well as they are versed in *les usages*, can give me no infallible information. I have already committed a thousand blunders. The Duchess of Keswycke looks upon me as a Goth, and Lady Grandison as a fine lady. Your customs, like the pronounciation of your language, appear quite arbitrary."

"Never mind such persons as the Duchess and Lady Grandison," replied her friend in a pacifying tone. "The great charm of Brighton society consists in little friendly parties, given without form or etiquette. Come with me to night to Lady Mary Milford's,—I see you have an invitation. Nothing can be more sociable or select than her *soirées*. It is her rule, both in London and Brighton, never to have large assemblies; the consequence is that every one is always dying to go to her, and that she commands the best society. Just now, she has her niece the brilliant Lady Sophia Clerimont staying with her; and is giving a series of tea parties by way of opening her house every night at a reasonable rate."

"The best society!"—"quiet, sociable parties!"—What could be more inviting to the ear of a foreigner, desirous of becoming acquainted with the far-famed,—the intellectual,—the hospitable,—the dignified coteries of English society; so different, so superior to the selfish, frivolous, impure circles of Paris and Vienna!—

"I am glad after all, that I came to Brighton," thought the Countess as she arrayed herself to accompany her friend to Lady Mary's, "it will serve to initiate me into the habits of England, before I launch upon the wider sea of London."

The experience of her own mansion had somewhat amended Countess Reppenheim's notions of the sort of "comfort" to be expected in the lodging-houses of a bathing place, the chief merit of which seems to consist in a free admission of the sea breezes;—nevertheless, she was somewhat surprised to observe that the best society in Brighton was about to assemble in two stuffy drawing-rooms, having scanty curtains of yellow cotton and a dingy carpet of green baize. The only sofa in the room was occupied on her entrance, by a group of young ladies who, on the appearance of a stranger,

whispered behind their fans; while several Hussar officers belonging to the regiment quartered in the town, lounged over the back of the sofa with the most intimate familiarity.

At a little distance sat the chaperons; three or four dull-looking middle-aged women (such as chaperons ought to be), saying, seeing, and even hearing nothing, except the mysterious rumours circulated by Sir Carmichael Domdaniel, a pompous little man with a military air, who went from one to the other whispering courtly nothings under screen and shelter of the enormous nose that served to impart importance to his whole person. Apart from the rest, lounged one very impudent, very chatty, very much rouged dowager; who gladly pounced upon so patient a listener as Countess Reppenheim.

"You perceive that we receive you *à l'Anglaise*," said Lady Mary to her new guest, pointing to the tea-table; and soon afterwards, on the arrival of a few supercilious young gentlemen in stiff cravats, headed by Fitzgerald and Clanhenry, the operation of tea-making commenced.

"Now then," thought poor Madame de Reppenheim, "I shall at last participate in this national feast. General conversation will enliven the ceremony:—and the colloquial superiority I have so often heard described, will render me insensible to the mingled odours of ill-trimmed lamps and an ill-dressed dinner."

But no!—there was no attempt at general conversation. The three young ladies whispered on three chairs instead of one sofa. The stiff-necked dandies exchanged monosyllables with the taciturn chaperons; Domdaniel talked broad with the impudent dowager; Lord Clanhenry sentimentalized with Lady Grasmere; and Mr. Fitzgerald with herself; a silver urn was brought in; and, to her great surprise, two full-grown footmen were admitted into the drawing-room to assist the butler in his operations. It was in vain that the handsome Frederick exerted himself for her amusement; she could not withdraw her eyes from the ceremony of rinsing tea-cups, and dispensing the boiling beverage that filled the room with steam.

"Nothing so pleasant, nothing so sociable as a tea-table!" exclaimed Fred. Fitz.; watching with delight the astonishment depicted on her face. "It is no longer the fashion to serve it ready made. In justice to ourselves, we cannot allow our servants to engross the enjoyments of making our

tea as well as our soup; or washing our cups and saucers as well as our plates and dishes."

"It is indeed a most amusing operation," said Madame de Reppenheim, blaming only her own want of *savoir vivre* in being unable to discover its peculiar charm. "I shall take care to have a tea-table at my *soirées* when I return to town."

"Charming creature, Lady Sophia Clerimont!" whispered Mr. Fitzgerald, directing her attention to one of the slender young ladies, who now presided at the tea-table. "A niece of Lady Mary's!"

"Charming indeed;" echoed the Countess, looking at the bare shoulders and red ringlets of the giggling ~~Ma~~ *Ma*; satisfied that in this instance, as in that of the tea-cooking, she had only to blame her own incompetency of judgment.

"She is so *naïve*—so unaffected;—says every thing that comes into her head. Did you hear her tell Lord Brancepeth just now that his nose reminded her of a macaw's beak? Positively Lady Sophia is the most original creature in the world."

"Very piquant,—very droll!" replied the ambassadress, trying to force a laugh at an observation which struck her as singularly ill-bred.

"She does the oddest things!" resumed Mr. Fitzgerald. "Did you hear of her having poor Clanhenry's favourite spaniel shaved, and sending it back to him painted in stripes like a zebra?"

"Excellent!" replied Madame de R——, perceiving, from the example of her companion, that she was expected to laugh heartily at the anecdote:—and she bent her eyes with unfeigned curiosity on this very original young lady, round whose chair, four of the hussars and three of the dandies were now clustered, bestowing immoderate applause upon her sallies.

"No one is so much the fashion as Lady Sophia!" said Fitzgerald. "She is quite a privileged person."

"Privileged indeed!" thought the wondering ambassadress, as she watched the familiarity with which she addressed and was addressed by the young men who disputed her notice. "And these, then, are fashionable manners!—How cold—how dull—how formal must all these people think me!—Since it is the custom to allow such latitudes to an unmarried woman, what must be the proceedings of women of my age and experience!"

"Is it true," inquired she of Lady Grasmere as soon as she could approach her, and striving to appear as little amazed as possible, "that Lady Sophia Clerimont is one of the most fashionable girls in town?"

"Oh, yes!" was her friend's reply; "She is a charming creature; full of wit and animation." She did not think it necessary to explain that this wit and animation consisted in the most flippant effrontery; that her popularity with the hussars and dandies arose from her possession of a fortune of ten thousand a year: and with the ladies (her rival in loquacity the well-rouged dowager included) from the dread of being made the subject of her caricature or pasquinades.

There was only one point, meanwhile among the many which excited her surprise in this her inauguration into the "sociable" parties of Brighton, on which the Countess ventured to express her wonderment to her friend.

"I thought," said she to Lady Grasmere, as they went out airing together in the snow the following morning, "that all these people were passing the winter at Brighton expressly to meet the Prince Regent?"

"And so they are."

"Impossible!—your friend Mr. Fitzgerald announced last night that his Royal Highness was expected in a day or two, and every one instantly exclaimed that the pleasure of the Brighton season was over;—that the Pavilion spoiled every thing else!"

"And so it does."

"Comment donc?"

"In the first place by completely changing the characters of half one's acquaintances. Persons who are only men and women at present, will be converted into mere courtiers the moment the Regent arrives."

"Only such butterflies as Fitzgerald, surely?"

"And then it breaks up all private parties. No one likes to send out cards with the chance of having their best people commanded away at the last minute. The society here is not extensive enough to admit of sparing fifty or sixty persons once or twice a week."

"True! but those whom I heard finding fault with the Pavilion, are precisely the people who form part of the set there."

"Otherwise they would not have ventured to abuse it.—You heard what Lady Edystone said about the *maussaderie* of the Prince's *soirées*?"—

"That chattering old dowager?—I did!"

"Should you have suspected from her tone and manner that it has been the object of her life for the last thirty years to be in favour with his Royal Highness?"—

"You jest!"

"When he was young, she made love to him; when he grew older, she made hate,—striving to render herself important in his eyes by espousing an adverse political party;—and now that he is no longer either an Adonis or a Whig, she affects to engage his attention *par réminiscence*, by being on excellent terms with all the people he likes best, and by following up all his plans of amusement as if they were her own."

"How unaccountable!—Had you but heard the impertinence in which she indulged respecting the Carlton House set! Did you but know the insinuations she threw out against the Pavilion party!"

"Of course!—By those very circumstances you might have guessed that she moved in no other; and that the persons she was slandering were her bosom friends."

"If she talked so of her intimate associates, what will she not say of an unfortunate stranger, like myself?"

"Nothing!—unless you should happen to get into favour, and interfere with her own projects. England is a place where people are made to pay dear for distinction of any description."

"You alarm me!"—said the poor Countess, sinking into a corner of the carriage. "After all, then, it appears that ingenuousness and cordiality are merely Utopian virtues.—After all, the English—the frank English—are growing as hollow and interested and artificial as the rest of the world!"

"Let us hope there are exceptions," said Lady Grasmere blushing deeply. "I should be sorry to distrust all my friends, or attribute unworthy views to even all my acquaintances. Lady Mary Milford is a charming person."

"I hope so!—But it strikes me that there is something overstrained in her politeness—something jesuitical in her excess of humility and deprecation. Before you have half done speaking, she answers you with a smile and a bow;—and whenever she catches your eyes from a distance, makes a sort of telegraphic signal of sympathy and intelligence. I observed her do it last night to every body in succession.—You see dear Lady Grasmere, how soon I am becoming in-

fectured with your national errors. You have already taught me to play the satirist."

"Do not exercise your genius in the first instance on my friend Lady Mary. Believe me you quite mistake her character. The softness of her manner arises solely from the excessive gentleness and philanthropy of her disposition; and, admitting to her house only those persons for whom she has the highest regard, nothing can be more natural than that she should favour them with tokens of interest."

"I dare say I am wrong," said Madam de Reppenheim, vexed with herself for having spoken harshly of the friend of her friend—"Besides *she* was the only one of the party who did not join in inveighing against the Pavilion; but frankly admitting to me that nothing could exceed the charm of the royal circle."

"Did she?"—replied Lady Grasmere, thoughtfully. "That is indeed incomprehensible. I have always heard her assert such very different opinions! Lady Mary is so indolent that she hates representation of any kind. She likes to wrap herself in an old gown and shawl, and sit gossiping in some odd corner with the Sir Carmichael Domdaniel; a *manière d'être* which does not by any means recommend her to the favour of the Regent. He likes to see people in their best looks, spirits, and costume; and, for some reason or other (one of those caprices to which you will grow accustomed after a season or two in London), has not invited Lady Mary or her charming niece these two years."

"Her praise, then, was at least disinterested."

"I fear not. There must be something on foot of which I am at present ignorant;" observed Lady Grasmere, falling into a *réverie* which lasted during the remainder of their drive. She did not think it necessary to degrade herself in the estimation of her friend, by admitting that she herself had never yet been included in his Royal Highness's invitations; and that one of her chief inducements to visit Brighton, was the hope that her extreme intimacy with the Prussian ambassadress, Lady Edystone, and others particularly distinguished by his notice, would assist her in the accomplishment of an honour the more eagerly coveted from the precarious chance of its attainment. The *parvenue* Viscountess saw others equally disqualified by birth, and far less recommended by nature, achieve the object of her ambition; and could conceive no motive, unless her deficiency of political interest, her want of a brother, father, husband,

son to support her claims in society, for the neglect. It did not occur to her indeed, that she was only too well recommended by nature;—that her attraction rendered her an object of jealousy to her own sex,—that she was, in short, far too pretty a woman to be admitted with safety into a circle, of which it was evident that she would form the brightest ornament. She had very little suspicion that, in spite of all the wires she was beginning to set in motion, her ostracism was already pre-determined by the rival jugglers of the Pavilion. Lady Mary Milford and her niece might very easily render themselves eligible; but the youthful dowager of Grasmere was out of the question.

CHAPTER IV.

A courtier is to be found only about princes. He knows no man that is not generally known. He puts more confidence in his words than his meaning, and more in his pronunciation than his words. He follows nothing but inconstancy; admires nothing but beauty; honours nothing but fortune. The sustenance of his discourse is names. He is not, if he be out of court; and, fishlike, breathes destruction when out of his own element.

SIR T. OVERBURY.

It was about a week after this conversation, just as Countess Reppenheim was beginning to form an opinion that English bathing-places are by no means so amusing as *les eaux*, and that the society of Brighton was pretty nearly on a par with a fifth-rate provincial town in Germany, that a sudden fermentation became apparent throughout the town. From the plebeian groups on the Steyne to the patrician one of Lady Mary Milford's drawing-room, every body assumed an air of fussy importance. The hussars jangled their spurs, Lady Sophia waved her ringlets, and the Brighton Chronicle announced with a tone of sentiment becoming the occasion, "The Prince Regent is once more amongst us, and this gay little town is itself again. His Royal Highness alighted at the Pavilion yesterday evening at about twenty minutes past six; having accomplished the journey in five hours and seventeen minutes. We noticed with regret that our august patron looked somewhat thinner than when he quitted us last Easter. He wore a light brown wig, inclining a shade nearer to auburn than usual; which perhaps contributed to the change of his appearance. All is now activity at Brighton.—This morning will be devoted by the nobility and gentry, and visitors, to leaving their inquiries at the Pavilion. A select party will have the honour of dining with his Royal

Highness this day ; and invitations are already issued for a grand ball to celebrate the annual festival of Twelfth Night. The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester are expected in a day or two."

Such was the tenor of the bulletin announcing the event that produced so wonderful a sensation !—With the exception of the issue of invitations for a Twelfth Night ball, ("a thought" to which the wishes of the good people of Brighton were both "father" and mother) the whole was correct ; and whereas the two preceding winters had been overcast by domestic calamities in the royal family, by the deaths of the royal mother and daughter of the Regent, it seemed determined that the present should shine with redoubled splendour. Lady Grasmere's nets were already spread ; she had paid her court in this quarter, and strengthened an intimacy in the other ; had given three dinners *à la cordon bleu* to a gouty old Earl who was supposed to possess peculiar influence at the Pavilion ; and made a sacrifice of a favourite edition of the Florence gallery to a lady of fashion, who was supposed to dictate the predilections of a lady of rank, who was believed to actuate those of the Delhai Lama. All was in excellent train ; and having hinted in a general way to Countess Reppenheim that, in consequence of her long residence abroad and the unfortunate domestic circumstances of the Prince Regent since her return to England, she had not yet been personally made known to him, except in a general way at the drawing-room, she waited the event in patient persuasion of being included in the invitations to the approaching fête.

Nothing could be more problematical than the state of society among the higher classes at the period in question. For some time it had been difficult to determine which held the greater influence over the circles of the aristocracy :—the nominal court of Queen Charlotte, or the virtual court of the Regent ; while the dawning prospects of the heiress apparent opened new vistas for the calculations of courtiership. But now all doubt on the subject was over. The good old Queen was no more ;—Claremont, by one of the most cruel bereavements that ever frustrated the hopes of a nation, was closed ;—and there was nothing left but Carlton House and the Pavilion to invite the intrigues of the courtly-minded. The Regent had already held his first independent drawing-room ; where Lady Grasmere, among a host of other beauties, was for the first time presented to his notice. But what availed

the drawing-room? — Unless distinguished by invitation either to the *fêtes* of the season or the private circle of the Pavilion, she felt that the one great step of her elevation was still unachieved ; and that jointure, jewels, beauty, popularity, all were insufficient for her happiness.

The weakness of the sex is rendered the scapegoat of so many follies, that it would be easy to ascribe this sole infirmity of a virtuous mind to feminine vanity, and the overweening influence of fashion. But nine times—nay, nine times and three-quarters in ten, every darling folly of woman-kind may be traced to the artifices of the wiser or more crafty moiety of the human race. It was Lord Clanhenry's pleasure, or rather he wished to make it his profit, that the lovely widow should find herself wanting in the only point enabling him to afford her support. During the six months which had elapsed since the amount of his Christmas bills (a collection of antiquities of singularly ancient date) had made it apparent to him that he must either marry or starve,—either possess himself of an heiress or follow his friend Brummell to Calais,—he had never ceased throwing out insinuations in Lady Grasmere's presence that a Viscountess by itself Viscountess, was a very paltry thing ; that the narrow sphere of a secondary woman of fashion was infinitely less distinguished than sturdy plebeianism ; that in England, as in all civilized countries since the reign of Louis le Grand, society was composed of two circles, the court and the nation,—personages and persons,—entities and non-entities ; and that in spite of her charming house, excellent establishment, and lovely person, she would be more enviable as wife to an eminent haberdasher, than as a Peeress unnoticed by the Prince Regent.

Women in possession of every thing to gratify their reasonable desires, are apt to sigh for straws ; and poor Lady Grasmere actually began to fancy herself a slighted and unhappy woman !—but her morbid sensibility led her to a very different conclusion from that anticipated by Clanhenry. Instead of resolving to give her hand to the man whose favour with the Regent would lead her triumphantly into the centre of the royal circle (devoting her fortune to a spendthrift and her person to a libertine), she preferred the safer course of attaching herself to the train of half a dozen old women, such as Lady Edystone, and relying on the bosom friendship of Countess Reppenheim. But Clanhenry was not to be so defeated. He had already succeeded in spreading a thousand

ridiculous reports at the expense of the Countess, and producing an unfavourable impression concerning her in the highest quarter; and determined to turn the mischief he had created to his own account.

"That Countess Reppenheim is a most decided bore!" sent round by means of the court-speaking-trumpet, Sir Carmichael Domdaniel, in a certain circle, in a certain tone, produced an effect even more certain than had even been anticipated by the man of tön; and the Count her husband soon observed with surprise, regret, and mortification, that while he himself was especially distinguished by the notice of the Regent, and while other women far less remarkable for beauty, grace, or accomplishments, were welcomed at the Pavilion with the most flattering attention, his own beloved Helene was received with courteous but formal solemnity.

There was no remedy, no appeal against this silent verdict of royal disapprobation; and the ambassador was cautious only to conceal from his wife his own opinion that she had unconsciously given offence at the English Court; an opinion which he knew would overcome her with vexation.

But Countess Reppenheim, however simple and confiding, was not so destitute of tact as to be unobservant that, although a frequent guest at the Pavilion, she was never voluntarily addressed by the Regent with more than the *salutation d'usage*.

"Surely it is very strange," said she, one night to Mr. Fitzgerald, (who, unaware of her extreme unpopularity in the circle, caused by Lord Clanhenry's aspersions, had ventured to seat himself by her side during one of the exquisite concerts executed by the private band of his Royal Highness), "It is very strange that the Prince Regent should have been sitting opposite for the last half hour talking to old Lady Molyneux, who is so deaf and tiresome; and that he has twice passed the vacant chair by my side, to address himself to some other person. *Chez nous*, it would be considered a breach of etiquette to treat the wife of a foreign minister with such marked neglect."

"You do not understand the customs of our eccentric country," said Fitzgerald, gladly seizing an occasion for quizzing a person whom it was his interest and pleasure to render ridiculous. "At other courts, royalty is expected to make the first advances. With us, the case is reversed. The Regent is doubtless surprised that you neglect to enter into conversation with him. All who are ambitious of his

Royal Highness's notice, follow up his bow of reception by some friendly inquiry."

"I could never venture on so extravagant a piece of presumption!" cried the courtieress of the Spree, in utter amazement.

"Nevertheless, unless you conform to the Prince's notions you will find yourself always on the black list. The first time he approaches, make some inquiry about his health (he is fond of being condoled with about his health); and wounded as he has been in his domestic affections, nothing delights his Royal Highness so much as allusions to the felicity of wedded life. It is a favourite topic."

And away went Mr. Fitzgerald, to enjoy from a sly post of observation the amusing spectacle caused by his mystification! A man less practiced or less bold in the art of quizzing, would have been almost alarmed at the air of amazement with which the most gracious, but most dignified Prince in Europe, suddenly found himself singled out and interrogated by the timid Prussian ambassadress. The theme so perversely selected was matter of only secondary surprise. His Royal Highness was more astonished at her Excellency's abrupt advances than his high-breeding permitted him to evince; or than his powers of self-command could wholly disguise.

The slightest cloud, the most trifling gesture of coolness on the countenance of any illustrious personage is sure to be perceived by one or other of the "small deer" ever on the watch to browse on some tiny leaf of royal favour, and proportionately curious respecting the sweet or bitter herbage cropped by the rest of the herd.

"What a woman that Countess Reppenheim is!"—yawned Lord Meerschau, (who had achieved some little distinction at the Pavilion by his fastidious curiosity in tobacco; who was said to freight an annual ship to the Havannah, and keep a resident agent at Maryland:) "She is actually boring his Royal Highness about his health, who has an antipathy to that sort of thing."

"How ill-judged of Reppenheim to bring his wife down to Brighton," said Theodosius Bogg, a man of considerable backstairs influence, in the habit of following about the court from place to place as a fetcher and carrier of nothings; a trustworthy envoy between my Lord Privy this and Mr. Secretary that. "He *must* perceive that she is *en mauvais*

odeur in a certain quarter, and consequently a mere millstone tied round his neck."

"How I should hate to be that Prussian ambassadress!" cried the wife of a minister high in the royal favour, to Lord Brancepeth, one of the most distinguished members of the coterie of Carlton House.

"Every thing she has done and said since her arrival has *manqué*! Handsome Fitzgerald calls her, the '*Bergère Châtelaine*;' and she really boasts a most pastoral simplicity."

"Reppenheim certainly mistook her vocation when he made her a *grande dame*," said Lord Clanhenry carelessly.

"*Made* her a *grande dame*!" cried Lord Brancepeth, disgusted by the party spirit he saw exercised against a lovely and interesting woman, merely because she chanced to "sail in the North" of royal opinion. "Surely you are aware that the Countess is issued of one of the noblest houses in Germany,—that she was a favourite maid of honour to the late Queen of Prussia,—that her father married one of the Saxe Hildburghausen family,—and—"

"Her mother may have been Field Marshal Suwarrow without improving her capacity for diplomatic representation," said Clanhenry vexed to find a man of Brancepeth's high standing in society upholding the claims of one it was his pleasure to depreciate. "I say again, as I said before, that she has no vocation for courts or courtiership."

"Of late years, so little has been known in England of courts or courtiership," observed Lord Brancepeth drily, "that perhaps the less we set ourselves up as arbiters on such points the better. Countess Reppenheim's manners possess the highest dignity,—the dignity of simplicity. She is not perhaps quite sufficiently on her guard against the hollowness of the world; but all she loses in this respect, as a *woman of fashion*, she gains in the regard and veneration of those whom she honours with her friendship."

"Including of course Lord Brancepeth and the order of the *Rationals*!" sneered Clanhenry.

"No," replied her amiable partizan, "I am not, at present, so fortunate. I have hitherto stood on terms of distant acquaintance with Countess Reppenheim. But henceforward I shall take particular pains to cultivate the intimacy of one who doubtless boasts peculiar merits and accomplishments, since she has drawn upon herself, during less than half a year's residence in this country, so much envy and so much misrepresentation."

In a few minutes after this strong declaration in her favour, Lord Brancepeth was seated in earnest conversation by the side of one on the point of being rebutted as a Paria from the high caste by which she was surrounded; enjoying the gratification so powerful with a generous mind, of affording protection to an injured and unoffending person.

Now of all the persons assembled in those radiant apartments, *his* was the suffrage Clanhenry was least willing to concede to the object of his animosity. Lord Brancepeth was precisely the sort of person against whom the arrows of ridicule are launched in vain. Straightforward, plain, manly, resolute, he was unassuming in his dress, equipage, and demeanour; and without any fastidious affectation of refinement, was so perfectly gentlemanly in mind and manners, that he might have appeared in a coat of the Cheltenham cut on a cabriolet of the Bath build, without the slightest fear of passing for any thing but what he really was—a first rate man of fashion. Leaving it to boys or *parvenus* to attract notice by the variety of their carriages or the finicality of their costume, he felt that his own place in society was definite; that it fulfilled all his ambition, and could be forfeited only by a base or unworthy action. Supported by this first great principle, he had been on the turf without a squabble or a duel; was a whist player to a considerable extent at the fashionable clubs, without risking his fortune, his honour, or his temper; and a first favourite with the Prince Regent, without having courted the royal smiles by adulation, or turned them to account by solicitation. The favourites were not jealous of him, the public did not mistrust him, even the public journals, whether ministerial or opposition, did not abuse him. Lord Brancepeth was, in fact, an upright and honourable man; and was estimated accordingly.

He might have been as upright as he pleased however—as honourable, and even as highly esteemed,—for any thing that Lord Clanhenry cared; had it not been for the general opinion that he was a pretendant to the favour of Lady Grasmere, and for his lordship's particular opinion that the pretension was not regarded by the lady as either saucy or overbold. Clanhenry was well aware that his own suit had little to offer in competition with such rivalry; that whether in respect to character, rank, fortune, person, or talents, his own endowments were immeasurably below those of Lord Brancepeth; and his only hope was to prevent

a liking from warming into passion, and a passion from proceeding to declaration, which threatened utter ruin to his matrimonial projects. He had foreboded evil from the moment of Brancepeth's arrival at Brighton; and now that he publicly vouchsafed his protection to Lady Grasmere's friend, a fatal presentiment whispered that he was about to vouchsafe the offer of his hand to Lady Grasmere's self. For a moment Clanhenry mistrusted his own previous line of policy. Perhaps he had acted injudiciously in exposing Countess Reppenheim to ridicule and unpopularity, and leaving to his rival the advantage of redeeming her from ignominy. Perhaps he might have done better by enlisting the sensibility of the fair Prussian in favour of his suit: and assailing the heart of the well-jointured widow, boldly and at once, backed by the influence of a bosom friend, as well as by his own influence with the fountain head of honour. Lord Clanhenry thought of the fatal first of January, and his bale of unpaid bills, and trembled! He had still a second string to his bow in the lady with the poppy-coloured ringlets. But even to *his* debased and vitiated taste there was a considerable difference between selling his coronet to the graceful Lady Grasmere or the giggling Lady Sophia Clerimont.

CHAPTER V.

Courts are too much for such weak wits as mine,
 Charge them with Heaven's artillery, bold Divine ;
 From such alone the great rebukes endure,
 Whose satire's sacred and whose rage secure.
 'Tis mine to wash a few light stains ; but theirs
 To deluge sin, and drown a court in tears.

DONNE'S SATIRES.

TWELVE years ago Brighton did not form, as now, a remote but splendid parish of the metropolis ; whither, during successive portions of the year, the eastern and western extremities of London transport themselves, with their characteristic customs and fashions ; but a small gossiping bathing-place, where, according to the Pythagorean precept, Echo was sedulously worshipped. Not a cathedral town in the realm was more addicted to *les cancans* of morning visiting ; or to those little scandals which are nursed up like lapdogs among elderly ladies and gentlemen who have more leisure than wit or discretion.

Instead of affording, as at the present moment, an extensive circle of the best society wholly independent of the palace, it presented, during the winter months, a knot of people of fashion, waiting patiently like a crowd of boys on occasion of some public rejoicing, to huzza for every squib that explodes, and ready to throw up their caps at every effort made for their amusement. If it happened that his Royal Highness was detained in town longer than usual, they felt aggrieved ; and complained of the dulness of Brighton as if they were there only to do him honour. If, on his arrival, it suited his health or convenience to limit the gaieties of the Pavilion to his own immediate circle, they murmured yet more loudly. The Prince Regent was regarded as respon-

sible for all that went amiss in the town to the discomfiture of its visitors; and was rendered accountable to them in his turn, for every piece of new furniture, every Chinese lantern, or enamel miniature, hung up in his private dwelling-house. The gorgeous apartments so hospitably thrown open, were subjected to criticisms, public and private, such as would not have been ventured upon the mansion of any other individual in the kingdom; and Brighton, indebted to his royal patronage for the very breath of its existence, was always the first to note and bruit abroad those trivial occurrences of domestic life which cannot be recorded without offence to the actors of the drama.

At that period, however,

(In our hot youth, when George the Third was King)

the place boasted in itself, and exhibited in its habitual visitors a character of originality, such as an increased population tends to diminish. In a crowd of any kind, there is no room for the development of oddity; and men and women, like horses, are apt to be subdued among multitudes of their own species. The Brighton of 1833 only too closely resembles the London of 1832; but the Brighton of 1820, resembled rather the Bath of 1800. There were, at that period, ambling along the Steyne, no fewer than three professed imitators of its royal patron;—three Prince Regents, in coat, wig, black stock, and cane;—who sneezed whenever it was rumoured that his Royal Highness had a cold,—and kept their beds whenever Sir Henry Halford visited the Pavilion.

There was the weazenéd beau, whom Warren's milk of roses, aided by a well-furred roquelaire and cachemere waistcoat, enabled despite his threescore years and fifteen to confront the Christmas breezes of the Marine Parade; and who still, among friends and *sotto voce*, ventured to qualify his royal pupil, as "that wild young dog."—There was the veteran *bel esprit* who, looking upon Sheridan and Jekyll as modern wits, had no great opinion of them; but persisted in filling Lady Sophia Clerimont's album with stanzas à la Chesterfield, and maccaronics in the style of Bishop Marley. There was the lofty Dowager in her moral farthingale of buckram; who, even in her peccadilloes, had erred with such an air of propriety and high-breeding, that nobody had a word of scandal to breathe against her. There was the worthy-minded dowager Lady Edystone, who openly professed her faith in the Pavilion, as a sanctuary hallowing

every object within its sphere. There were two or three bilious old K. C. B.s, with Sir Carmichael Domdaniel at the head of the squadron; who, being occasionally invited to fill a corner of the dinner table at the Pavilion, commanded the respect and admiration of the town, by giving it to be understood that they were secretly employed as chief machinists of its scenery and decorations. There was the wife of the favourite Bishop, expanding and expanding like the frog in the fable, till her friends trembled for her safety;—there was the wife of the favourite physician, whispering about her little anecdotes of the royal saloon, and comprehending herself and its illustrious master in the “we” which gave force to her narrative;—there were fifty other tiresome women who retained the privilege of making themselves disagreeable throughout every gradation of Brighton society, in consideration of the circumstance that they were occasionally shone upon by a ray from the royal countenance, or because the shaking mandarins, their husbands, were blest with the invaluable privilege of the royal button!—

It was, in fact, an act of heroism to hazard a rainy or snowy season in the midst of such a set of empty and incorrigible idlers; the business of whose lives consisted in discussing things which did not concern them, and personages whom they did not concern. In point of scandal and gossiping it was worse than the worst state of the City of the Avon; where a succession of amusements served to divert public attention from private grievances; while not a single glass of wine was drunk by the Prince Regent, not an airing taken by one of his guests, not a ride in the manege, not a turn on the lawn, but a palaver was held by the elders of the tribes of the East Cliff and the West, to decide upon the eligibility of the proceeding? The Court did not, however, suffice to occupy the energies thus vehemently excited; and the whole society of the place was successively subjected to the ordeal, by way of keeping in the hand of the inquisitors.

Among these, the mansion of Lady Mary Milford was at once a sanctuary and a temple of adoration. The men crowded thither to do homage to the heiress, the women to manufacture scandals with the aunt; and as Lady Sophia, in addition to her bare shoulders and golden tresses, possessed a mean and crafty spirit, her policy had suggested the adoption of Lady Grasmere as an ally, in the dread of her attractions as a rival. The coquette could not make up her mind to spare to the beautiful widow even so poor a con-

quest as Fitzgerald or Clanhenry : far less to leave her in undisturbed possession of Lord Brancepeth,—to whose captivation, for the last two years, her own efforts had been secretly but sedulously directed. Frivolous and heartless as she was, Lady Sophia was steady in her preference ; and though willing to giggle with lancers, hussars, and dragons, her main object had never been neglected.

“ News—news—news !—” cried Lady Edystone, tripping into their room with affected juvenility, the day after the concert ; “ What will you give me for being the first to tell you that the prudish Lord Brancepeth has struck up a flirtation with the *mouton qui rêve ambassadress* ? ”

“ Nothing,” said Lady Mary, “ unless you can bring us proof to back assertion ;—the thing is impossible ! ”

“ By no means even *improbable*,” added her niece ; her perception on the subject somewhat quickened by jealousy. “ Countess Reppenheim is the confidante of Lady Grasmere ; and Lord Brancepeth’s pretensions in that quarter are sufficiently notorious.”

“ Young ladies are always espying symptoms of matrimony,” said the dowager maliciously. “ For my part, I have no doubt that his incense burns to the goddess on whose shrine it is laid. Lady Grasmere was not there, last night, to be flattered by his patronage of her friend ; and I am persuaded that nothing but a strong personal fancy would have induced him to act the Quixote as he did, in her behalf.”

“ Who were his antagonists ?—”

“ The whole room was laughing at her.”

“ And why ? ”

“ Never was any human being so absurd ! Clanhenry protests that she is bent on making a conquest of the Regent ; and last night, she certainly followed him up and down, boring him to death. But here comes Mr. Fitzgerald !—He will tell you all about it.”

“ He seldom sees or hears any thing in which his own vanity is not concerned. I have no doubt he was sauntering past one of the great mirrors half the evening, observing nothing but the reflection of his own beautiful person !—Ah ! Fitzgerald !—How do you do this morning ?—delighted to see you !—why did you not come earlier ?—We expected you at luncheon.”

“ Did you ? ” muttered the handsome Frederick, who, during the stay of the court at Brighton, always grew mysterious and important. “ I am sorry I was not aware of it,

that I might have prevented your disappointment. I had engagements this morning to sing with the Trills, beside my usual lounge at Lady Grandison's; and instead of fulfilling either, I have been riding in the school."

"With his Royal Highness?"—

"With his Royal Highness."

"Then you can tell us the true state of this mysterious business. What does he intend to do with her?"—

"With whom?"

"Countess Reppenheim!—Lady Edystone assures us she made such bold advances last night, that no one knows what to think of it."

"Has the thing got wind already?" said Fitzgerald walking to the fire-place, and leisurely arranging his collar at the glass.

"How much his Royal Highness must have been disgusted!" said Lady Sophia in a tone of interrogation.

"I really cannot advance an opinion; I have never given it a minute's concern," said Fred. continuing his labours of the toilet, and affecting diplomatic mystery.

"I should think she would not be invited again?" observed Lady Mary.

"I cannot form an idea."

"Probably she will go back to London?"

"Certainly, if her stay at Brighton is at an end."

"What a bore for the Count?"

"He does not seem a man to be easily bored."

"But they have always set themselves up for a domestic felicity couple!" sneered Lady Edystone.

"Have they?"—observed Fitzgerald, determined to know nothing concerning any body. "Who are they?—I really know nothing about them. Reppenheim is Prussian ambassador or some such thing, is he not?—They asked me to dinner four or five times just before I came down here; but I never went."

"Yet you seemed intimately acquainted with the Countess, when you met her here the other night with Lady Grasmere," cried Lady Sophia, in a tone of pique. "You were sitting by her half the evening."

"Was I?—It is quite a chance where one is seated in large parties."

"But it was a very small party," said Lady Mary indignantly, "you know I never *have* large parties;—and the

place was of your own selection. The Regent not being then arrived, you were not quite so superfine and inaccessible as you are just now."

"Me fine!—what an accusation" said the dandy, colouring slightly at her vehemence. "Believe me, my dear Lady Mary, there is nothing I enjoy so much as your little coteries; and as to this piece of Pavilion scandal, I know no more of it than yourself. What are you all talking about?—Is his Royal Highness supposed to have a *foiblesse* for the fair Reppenheim?"—

"Exactly the reverse. You know very well that she is his *bête noire*; and all we want to learn is the motive of Lord Brancepeth's sudden declaration in her favour.

"Lord Brancepeth?—*Encore du nouveau!*—I never heard their names mentioned together."

"You will get nothing out of him," cried Lady Edystone peevishly. "Half an hour's trot in the royal *manège* has made him so very great a man, that there is no talking to him this morning."

"At least, pray tell us," said Lady Sophia, "are the invitations out yet for the ball?"—

"Not that I am aware of."

"But there is to be a ball?"—

"So the newspapers assert."

"But did you hear nothing of it at the Pavilion?"—

"Not that I recollect. Why should there be a ball?—It only produces a mob of Brighton people, just such as one meets at the Duchess of Keswycke's or Lady Grandison's; whereas, so long as his Royal Highness restricts himself to his private circle, he can have exactly whom he pleases, and form the most perfect society in the world."

This observation,—which was intended as a little punishment to Lady Mary for her attack upon himself, by rendering both aunt and niece painfully conscious of their own insignificance, was studiously echoed by Lady Edystone as one of the elect; as well as by the dull old dormouse Sir Carmichael Domdaniel, whose military rank had obtained him a favourable reception at half the courts in Europe, while his tedious inanity excluded him from the more independent circles of unfashionable life.

"If the most perfect society in the world affords no better amusement to Lord Brancepeth and the rest of you than to flirt with such a quiz as poor Countess Reppenheim, I wish you joy of the pleasure you find at the Pavilion!" cried Lady

Sophia with indignation. "Ah! my dear Lady Grasmere," she continued, affecting to catch a glimpse of the new visitor who had entered the room during her speech, "pray excuse me if you find me abusing your friend. But really all Brighton has found so much to say respecting her barefaced flirtation with Lord Brancepeth, that I scarcely consider it necessary to apologize for adding my voice to the majority."

"I shall really begin to fancy myself the keeper of Countess Reppenheim's conscience," said Lady Grasmere, returning Lady Mary's salutation, as she seated herself hurriedly in the circle. "Lord Clanhenry stopped my carriage just now on the Parade, to insinuate that she had been making love to the Regent; and to declare, without circumlocution, that Lord Brancepeth is making love to her. I fancy both reports are equally authentic."

"She make advances to the Prince Regent!" snorted Domdaniel in his corner.

"Brancepeth make advances to *her*!" reiterated Lady Mary, who had long destined him for her niece.

"He certainly paid her great attention last night," said Fitzgerald, with affected carelessness. "When he put her into the carriage, I really never witnessed a more pathetic farewell; and in the face of a whole brigade of royal footmen, who probably wished his lordship at the bottom of the West Cliff, for keeping them standing at the door of the vestibule, to face the night air."

"It is very strange," exclaimed Lady Grasmere, growing more and more uneasy, "that my friend the Countess should be the only woman in Brighton whom it is unlawful to hand to her carriage! Sir Carmichael!—Mr. Fitzgerald,—pray deign to inform me whether you put evil constructions upon the conduct of every woman who accepts your own services on similar occasions?"

"Give me an opportunity of proving the fact," whispered Frederick, approaching her, and assuming a loverlike tone, so as to be heard only by herself. "And yet, you well know that I should venture to put no construction on any proceeding of yours but such as your own will might instigate."

But, notwithstanding the crouching attitude glozing smile and earnest look with which these words were uttered, they elicited no reply from the lady, not of his love, but of his courtship. A possibility had just occurred to her, or rather an assertion had just been made, which absorbed all her

interest; nay, even sufficed to create an interest unknown before. Lady Grasmere, in the thoughtlessness of wild seventeen and in obedience to her parents, had made an ambitious marriage with a man old enough to be her grandfather; but it was only in proportion as her experience of the world increased, that she became conscious of the extent of the sacrifice. "I have resigned every thing for ambition," thought she, whenever she contemplated the higher destinies of other households. "But let me at least be consistent in my worship to the idol I have adopted for my divinity. Having renounced both the pleasures and penalties of love, I will content myself exclusively with the gratification arising from my brilliant position in society. I have every thing the world can offer. When once I command a favourable reception at court, I shall not have a wish unaccomplished; nor shall any thing induce me to give myself a second master, and sacrifice the independence I have bought so dear.—The homage of Lord Clanhenry and the rest of them does me no harm; but I trust I know myself and them too well to be deceived by their interested professions."

Now "the rest of them," although a widely collective, was a very indefinite figure of speech; it included all London, and designated no one. But it consequently included many who formed no pretensions to the honour, and neglected to except some, whom Lady Grasmere could have no plea for comprehending in the list of her mercenary suitors. Among these was Lord Brancepeth; a man whom common report had often pointed out as her lover; but who, in his own person, had never given the slightest hint in confirmation of the rumour. As one of the most distinguished members of fashionable society she had received with pleasure his overtures of acquaintance, when opening her house to the London world at the expiration of her widowhood; and had occasionally received from him in return, those attentions which a well bred man is in the habit of paying to every woman in whose house he is a frequent guest. But there his homage ended. He had never breathed a word resembling love; had never fixed upon her those ardent looks which she was apt to detect in the eyes of others; or besieged her by those (falsely called) *petits soins*, which form in a woman's estimation the *greatest* attentions in the world.

Lady Grasmere was accordingly wise enough to persuade herself that the pleasure she took in his courtesies arose solely from the gratification of her vanity, by proving to cer-

tain of the Exclusives by whom she was tacitly excluded, that their idol, the distinguished Lord Brancepeth, was to be found in her train; that he, the favourite of the Regent and darling of the coteries, was not too proud to call her carriage, or carry her shawl. Her lordship's vanity must, however, have been enormous, if the feelings of eager delight with which she saw him enter her opera box, or found him turn his horse's head to join her in the park—or if the accelerated pulsation of her heart when Brancepeth, in the course of a formal visit, was tempted to bestow some warmer expression of admiration on the embroidery or the drawing with which he found her occupied—arose solely from so contemptible a source. That it could be love which caused her emotion under such circumstances was of course out of the question. In the first place, because Lady Grasmere had formally renounced all allegiance to that most capricious of divinities; and, in the second, because Brancepeth was an Adonis, nearly fifteen years her senior; and Lady Grasmere, who had begun life at so early an age, fancied even herself, at six or seven and twenty, considerably advanced in years! She had, however, no leisure for consideration of the business. All her thoughts for some months past, had been absorbed by the one great object, of obtaining admission to the royal circle; and to this even Lord Brancepeth was of secondary importance.

But notwithstanding this engrossing project of self-aggrandizement, it certainly had occurred to her, during the three weeks of her residence at Brighton, that even the moderate measure of his lordship's attentions was strangely diminished. Although habitually admitted as a morning visitor at her house in London, he had been satisfied to leave a formal card at her door, without even attempting to profit by the privilege; he had met her at several *soirées* at the Duchess of Keswycke's, and two or three of Lady Mary Milford's sociable tea-cookings, and contented himself with a gracious salutation, without attempting to approach her. She had sometimes flattered herself in town, that he preferred her sober style of conversation to the flashy flippancy of the satirical Lady Sophia Clerimont, and the coarse *double entendre* of Lady Edystone; that a friendly and confidential ease of intercourse was established between them; as agreeable to him as to herself. But it was plain that she had overrated her influence; for he now bestowed his attentions on both—or rather on any one and every one rather than herself.

Now the fair widow who, like all persons whose minds are dominated by a ruling prejudice, was apt to ascribe every little slight she experienced to the inferiority of her birth, actually lowered her estimation of Lord Brancepeth's character sufficiently to believe that, although in the wide wilderness of London he had no objection to waste a few hours of the season on a young and handsome woman with a good establishment, and tolerable acceptance in society, was not anxious to compromise his own dignity by displaying at Brighton any thing approaching to intimacy with an individual living without the pale of fashionable legitimacy.—Having observed that many silly persons of her acquaintance were no sooner admitted to move in that peculiar sphere, than they ceased to remember even the existence of a planet unincorporated in *the* one great system,—she ventured to believe that the noble-minded Brancepeth despised her for her inferiority to the higher thrones and dominions of exclusive life!—The mere supposition, indeed, tended to magnify her desire for the notice of royalty far more than the sneers of young Fitzgerald, or the solemn irony of Lord Clanhenry.

But on the suggestion of Lady Sophia Clerimont, a sudden light broke in upon her mind! Brancepeth had more than once avowed in her hearing, his admiration of the feminine delicacy and simplicity of the new ambassadress; and Countess Reppenheim unhesitatingly cited Lord Brancepeth as the most agreeable and most high bred man she had met in England. But neither of them had expressed more than admiration. How should they?—It was not to *her* they would make an avowal of a less lawful sentiment;—it was not to a woman of blameless life and manners, such as herself, that a confession of illicit passion was likely to be confided. *She* was now, however, enlightened!—Her friend had doubtless formed an attachment to the sedate Brancepeth: which was not only returned, but had been the means of withdrawing his attentions from herself. Perhaps it was a hope of improving her intimacy with the object of her tenderness, which had originally suggested the preference testified for her society by the Countess?—Jealousy is a hasty traveller, and jumps at all conclusions! In a moment Lady Grasmere overstepped all boundaries of common sense, and succeeded in persuading herself that she was doubly a dupe;—that Countess Reppenheim's assumed virtues, and Lord Brancepeth's pretended moderation of character, were equally frauds practised upon her credulity, and calling for exposure and

contempt. And although, in Lady Milford's drawing-room, under the inquisition of the malignant Lady Sophia, the scandalous Lady Edystone, and that very universal circulating medium Domdaniel the diner-out and morning visitor, she was careful to let no symptom of her irritation escape, her heart waxed hot within her at the notion that those very Pavilion parties to which Brancepeth affected indifference and the Countess aversion, had been made the means of cementing their connection secure from her own observation. It was but the day preceding that Helene had been protesting her extreme disinclination to join that evening's circle; and had even hinted to the Count her wish to put forth a pretext of indisposition as an apology for her absence.—Hypocrite!—Lady Grasmere could not pardon herself for having been imposed upon by such shallow artifices! Helene, who pretended such attachment for her husband—such fondness for her children,—*she* to prove Haggard!—and with the blush of modesty still pure upon her cheek—the tears of sensibility still glittering in her eyes.—Hypocrite—hypocrite—hypocrite!—There appeared nothing so unprecedented or unaccountable in the existence of an adulterous passion, to a person so experienced in the scandals or wickedness of society as Lady Grasmere, but that she readily gave ear to the imputation. But, alas! amid all this virtuous indignation, all this mental excitement, all this disgust against both the sin and the sinner, a second discovery, still more appalling than the first, suddenly burst upon her mind;—she was certainly in love with Lord Brancepeth herself, or she would not have cared half so much about the matter!

CHAPTER VI.

O hard condition—twin-born with greatness,—
 Subjected to the breath of every fool !

HENRY IV. PART. II.

FITZGERALD was but an echo to the general sentiments of the royal circle at the Pavilion, in reprobating those official entertainments to which all persons of a certain rank, having left their names, were invited as a matter of etiquette, without regard to preference or prejudice ;—causing a general disarrangement of the establishment,—considerable fatigue to the illustrious host,—and no satisfaction to the persons chiefly concerned. A fête of any magnitude was regarded at the Pavilion as a sacrifice to propriety and popularity ; to be postponed as long as possible, and if possible altogether evaded. It either did not occur to, or did not concern the chief movers of the pageant, that divers persons (in addition to the Lady Grasmeres and Lady Mary Milfords) had visited Brighton with no other object than the hope of being included in one of those universal gatherings ; that the Duchess of Keswycke had brought her diamonds fifty-nine miles,—that Lady Grandison had been at the cost of a velvet dress with trimmings of Brussels' point,—that the Bishop's lady had ordered a new grey satin gown,—and Colonel F. afforded a first rate dancing-master to his two awkward daughters,—solely in anticipation of some such festal solemnity. Had his Royal Highness himself been sufficiently at leisure to conjecture the enormous importance attached by many respectable individuals to an evening passed at the Pavilion, such was his proverbial good-nature that he would not for a

moment have lent an ear to those who affected to consult his own health and inclination in persuading him that a ball was superfluous. The court was cautious, however, against letting the result of these nefarious counsels transpire; and day after day rumours grew stronger of an approaching issue of invitations. Velvet dresses continued to arrive from town, and white satin to glisten in the hands of the mantua-makers, without the slightest suspicion that all their splendours would be wasted on the desert air.

But Lady Grasmere was no longer one of the speculators on this important subject. The beautiful costume she had procured from Paris with a view to the momentous event, was laid aside and forgotten in its packing case. She scarcely recollected that such a superfluity as a diamond necklace existed in the world;—cared nothing for the notice of King or Kaiser;—and, if the notion of the illuminated halls of the Pavilion ever entered her mind, it was with a shudder of disgust at the remembrance that it was *there* her enemies had plotted against her peace.

Resolved as she was, that neither the Countess nor the Countess's lover should detect her profound mortification at the discovery of their baseness, she was cautious that no abrupt rupture with her former friend should induce inquiry, expostulation, or explanation; and accordingly determined to break off the connection as gradually and unconcernedly as possible. With Lord Brancepeth, indeed, she must assume a totally different line of conduct; for whereas since her observation of his coldness towards herself, she had treated him with increasing distance and reserve, she now determined to mask the true state of her feelings under an assumption of gay indifference;—to accost him more familiarly;—to defy him with all the reckless daring of despair.

Meanwhile a train of circumstances was arrayed against her, over which, independent as she was, Lady Grasmere had no control. At the very moment she was forming these desperate resolutions, the Countess, her beloved friend—her treacherous enemy—was giving audience in her dressing-room to Lady Beaulieu; who, having arrived from town to pass the remainder of the holidays at the Pavilion, was struck with surprise and regret to learn in a mysterious whisper from Sir Carmichael, that her old acquaintance the Countess was so little in favour with the ruling powers, or *their* ruling powers.

"I cannot make it out," replied she, with her usual frank goodnature. "Countess Reppenheim is a charming woman, and can have done nothing that ought to give offence."

Sir Carmichael Domdaniel was of course ready with the lesson that had been taught him; and immediately pronounced, under the shadow of his intrusive proboscis, that "she was considered a sad bore."

"By whom?" inquired the straightforward Lady Beaulieu.

"By every body!"

"Every body is less than nobody. Besides, my dear Sir Carmichael, were every body who is pronounced a bore to be sneered out of society, which of us would be safe?"

A laugh immediately went round; but Domdaniel had not the slightest suspicion at whose expence. "She intrudes herself so officiously upon his Royal Highness," said he, "that it is quite disgusting. She deserves to be sent to Coventry." And he twisted his nose with a gigantic expression of contempt.

"But, my dear Sir Carmichael, supposing all the persons were to be sent to Coventry who intrude themselves officiously into the society of the Prince Regent, think what an increase of population that far-famed city would have to thank us for!"

Again a laugh went round, and again the little K.C.B. wondered what could make them all so merry.

"And then she flirts so desperately with Lord Brancepeth," said he, impatient of any merriment which did not arise from one of his own stale puns.

"Does she?" cried Lady Beaulieu, to whom his Lordship was nearly related, and who had experienced considerable alarm lest he should degrade himself and his family by an alliance with the *roturière* Lady Grasmere. "That is the best thing I have heard of her yet! I must go instantly and thank her for her patronage of my cousin of Brancepeth," and, without waiting to ascertain what further inuendoes were going on under the gnomon of the indignant Sir Carmichael, she flew to the residence of the ambassadress, and received a cordial welcome.

"I am so glad you are come at last;—I have missed you very much," said the Countess. "Either Brighton is very dull,—or—"

"You have been looking all this time at the reverse of the tapestry. I hear sad histories about you. I am told

that you live with a set of people such as never were heard of."

"Who can have told you so?"—

"Authority too high to be either quoted or impugned."

"High as it may be, I have a right to take up my own defence."

"Hush, hush, hush! Can you in the first place deny that you have divers times made your appearance at the Pavilion *soirées*, looking very handsome, and, with malice aforethought, striving to make yourself very agreeable?"

"On the contrary, Mr. Fitzgerald assured me only last night that I did not strive half enough. And yet when I followed his injunctions—"

"Frederick Fitzgerald then is the traitor?"—interrupted Lady Beaulieu. "My cross examination has been very soon successful! *Reste à savoir* what could be his motive for so malicious a piece of advice. In the next place, my dear Countess, you are further accused of the high crime and misdemeanour of a *liason* with Lady Grasmere."

"There, indeed, I plead guilty; without admitting the libel implied in your arraignment. I cannot perceive the criminality of a friendship with one of the most amiable women at Brighton."

"In the world, if you will! But she is not one of us, and therefore does you a serious injury."

"Not one of whom,—of what?—Surely Lord Grasmere was a man of the highest rank and distinction."

"Of the highest *fashion* (which in England you will find a far more lofty distinction), till he chose to marry his bailiff's daughter."

"Impossible!—my friend Lady Grasmere is accomplished, graceful, well informed—"

"Very likely.—When a woman's education is completed by her husband, instead of her parents and the pastors and masters acting under their authority, I suppose, for the novelty's sake, he takes care to do justice to his pupil. *As reste*, this Lady Grasmere has done wonders in society, and gets on vastly well in her own humdrum way. But she does not even aspire to measure lances with those of the true faith. We know nothing about her, and wish to know nothing; and consequently *you must* know nothing, if you are anxious to be one of us."

"I am anxious, it is true, to be on better terms in a certain quarter, for I fear it vexes Reppenheim to observe how very

little satisfaction I have given. But neither for the accomplishment of that object nor of any other, will I give up the friendship of one who, from the moment of my arrival has overwhelmed me with kindness."

"That was very impertinent of her!—She was well aware that her standing in society did not entitle her to pay you any such attentions."

"What a notion!—Do, pray, my dear Lady Beaulieu, allow me to present her to your acquaintance; and then you will judge more fairly."

"To *my* acquaintance?—Not for worlds! Lady Grasmere is just the sort of woman I never permit myself to know, unless I have some immediate object in patronising and bringing her forward. Your friend has advanced beyond the necessity for that sort of kindness; and therefore she must remain where she is, in all the infamy of too ostensible obscurity—of being one whom every body and nobody knows. Take my word for it, Countess, she will never get a step further in the world."

"In *her* place, I should be very well satisfied to remain where she is."

"*She* is not exactly of that opinion, I fancy; or she would now be at her beautiful villa in Surrey, instead of courting contempt from the *beau monde* at Brighton."

"She is idolized by Lady Mary Milford and her set."

"Shocking, shocking!—where could you pick up such people?—They are the very superlative of *mauvais ton*!" cried Lady Beaulieu, beginning to fear that the woman she had undertaken to exonerate and defend was after all an incorrigible offender. "But tell me," she exclaimed, brightening up with a sudden reminiscence; "what is all this history about you and my cousin Brancepeth?"

"Only that Lord Brancepeth is the most delightful of men," replied the Countess, blushing deeply at the remembrance of his kindness of the preceding night, but without by any means conjecturing the extent or nature of the "history" which had reached Lady Beaulieu's ears.

"For once I can sympathize with your enthusiasm," said her ladyship, not a little surprised at the *naïveté* of the avowal. "He is indeed a charming person—very different from the Lady Grasmere and Lady Marys you seem to have taken under your protection."

"They are no less under *his*. It was with *them* I first became acquainted with Lord Brancepeth."

"Men go every where. It does not commit *them*."

"But Brancepeth goes no where so much as to my friend Lady Grasmere's."

"On *your* account of course. Quite right. We all understand that sort of thing."

"What sort of thing?—My dear Lady Beaulieu, pray explain yourself. You are so enigmatical this morning that you have puzzled me to death!"

"Well, do not disturb yourself further; but come to the Pavilion to-night with a determination to give up this pernicious friend."

"At least I shall not offend you by the sight of our intimacy. Lady Grasmere has resided so long abroad, that at present she has not the honour to be particularly known to his Royal Highness; and—"

"Yes, yes, yes! I am perfectly aware of all that; and the time will shortly come when *you* will understand it too, or my pains will be very much thrown away. *Au revoir, chere Contesse*; do not forget my injunctions."

Meanwhile, Fitzgerald, having ascertained that Lord Clanhenry was engaged to pass the morning at the Pavilion for a council of costume touching certain changes to be made in the uniform of the household troops, of which models had been sent down from town, and in which Clanhenry, as a well-dressed man of twenty years experience, was supposed to be a *cognoscente*,—resolved to profit by the occasion to address his homage to Lady Grasmere. Having shaken off the importunate arm of Sir Carmichael Domdaniel, who was apt to adhere like a barnacle to every goodly ship sailing to or from the port of the Pavilion, he made his appearance in her ladyship's drawing-room with an air very different from the tone of courtly apathy he had assumed to dazzle the eyes of Lady Sophia Clerimont. He was now the handsome Fred. Fitzgerald;—*éveillé*, anecdotic;—almost as *éveillé* and anecdotic as when labouring to attract the notice of his royal patron by piquant narratives of all that was, or was not going on in society,—his mimicries of Domdaniel's mysterious whispers, and prolix manifestos; his details of a new and wonderful remedy for the gout; or description of "a mare, the most perfect thing of the kind in England, *exactly* calculated for his Royal Highness's weight." Perceiving that Lady Grasmere was miserably out of spirits, he judged the occasion favourable to a display of his entertaining powers, and a manifestation of his desire to devote them for life to her service.

But all was unavailing. In defiance of his best stories, told in his best manner,—in defiance of his admirable style of quizzing Lady Mary and Lady Sophia,—his sneers at her friend Lady Edystone, his Mathews-like imitation of his own friend Lord Clanhenry's obese efforts at being graceful, which, as he observed, resembled the frisky play of a walrus,—the fair Viscountess could not, would not, might not be amused.—He abused all her intimates; hinted that the whole fair group of Milfordian gigglers were paying their addresses to him; and more than hinted that he was desirous of paying *his* to herself.

It would have formed an amusing study for Newton or Leslie, or any other of the delineators of the lights and shadows of courtly beauty, to see the fine figure of Lady Grasmere thrown listlessly into her high-backed chair; for once careless of effect, and through that very carelessness producing fifty times more effect than usual. Her exquisitely modelled hand, entangled in the luxuriant tresses of her hair; her large lustrous hazel eyes fixed vacantly on the carpet; her Grecian lips, compressed with the consciousness of injury; while near her sat the grimacing dandy, labouring to throw all Lovelace into his countenance, all Grammont into his *persiflage*, all St. Preux into his eloquence;—now affecting fashionable cynicism;—now the *laissez-aller* self-possession of a man of the world;—now the *air pénétré* of the tenderest of lovers. No Savoyard's monkey ever went through a greater variety of attitudes and evolutions!—But the more he prated, the more evident became Lady Grasmere's pre-occupation of mind. The more he laughed at his own *bon-mots* the graver grew her silence.

"Confound the woman!" thought the despairing wooer. "Will nothing provoke her to smile—nothing excite her attention?—I must pique her, then, or she will go to sleep before my face."

"By the way, I am so glad," he now observed in a tone of amiable candour, "that our poor friend the Countess is likely at last to creep out of the shades! To be sure it must be miserably provoking to a woman entitled to play a certain part in society, to find herself distanced solely by her own *manque d'usage*. An ambassadress,—a woman really, I am told, *d'assez bonne maison!* and yet, managing to fall back into the mediocracy by the mere weight of her own want of tact. However, Brancepeth has now taken her by the hand, and no doubt she will do very well. At present,

you know, Countess Reppenheim is not at all known in London: fortunately she has not had an opportunity of committing herself *there*; and she will make her *début*, after all, under the happiest auspices."

"Of course!" replied Lady Grasmere, somewhat roused by the name of her offending friend. "I understand Lady Beaulieu is arrived; and it is her vocation to do the honours to the ladies of the *corps diplomatique*."

"Lady Beaulieu?—Lady Beaulieu has her own affairs to manage!—No, no! I alluded to Brancepeth. Brancepeth stands very well in a certain quarter, and will no doubt do away the impression produced by the Countess's homely air and breaches of *convenance*. Nothing is so important for a *nouvelle débarquée* as to have some friendly guide to show her a little of the *terrein*. It is a distinct art to move well in a certain circle; an art only to be acquired by experience."

This was intended as a side-wind illustration of his own value and importance to his fair friend. But, alas! she replied only by a peevish exclamation: "It is an art the accomplishment of which is dearly paid for by the forfeiture of one's reputation and self-respect."

"To be sure," persisted the Honourable Frederick, rolling the corner of his cambric handkerchief into the form of an *allumette*; "reputation, and all that sort of thing, is very good as far as it goes. But 'I'd rather be a dog and bay the moon, or even *la très honoré Madame l'Evêque's* toddling poodle and bay an Argand lamp, than enrol myself at once in the deadly brigade of the humdrums. Now our dear Countess was born and educated a humdrum; and *entre nous*, even Brancepeth (who is a devilish good fellow in his way) approaches to the humdrumatic style. One never heard of his doing or saying anything out of the common way."

"The very criterion of his excellence!" cried the Viscountess, piqued out of her self-possession. "Lord Brancepeth does, says, and thinks exactly as he ought; and consequently never renders himself a theme for the discussion of society or the scandal of the newspapers."

"Content to dwell in decencies for ever,"

quoted the dandy with a sneer.

"The happiest and safest of all earthly tabernacles!" exclaimed Lady Grasmere, her naturally pale cheek flushing with a sudden glow. "A man who can afford to restrict himself to his allotted path of life, without any consciousness

of defect or deficiency rendering it advisable to attract or distract public attention by glaring absurdities or pompous displays, proves that he is master of himself and of the world!"

"*De la philosophie!*" sneered Fitzgerald, startled by this burst of enthusiasm from the recumbent statue. "I see I must apply for your ladyship's assistance in—"

He was prevented concluding his retort by the announcement of Sir Carmichael Domdaniel; who, with his usual self-assurance of being at all times, in all places, the most welcome of men, placed a chair as close to Lady Grasmere's as possible, and commenced his ordinary disclosures of profound secrets stolen from the daily papers, and bon-mots stolen from the jest-books of the eighteenth century.

"And so, my dear Madam, after all, there is to be no ball at the Pavilion this Christmas! For my part, I'm delighted;—there is nothing in which I luxuriate so much as those little private parties, where every one worth seeing, meets every one he wishes to see;—eh! Fitzgerald."

But Frederick was sulky and silent.

"You see, my dear Madam, between ourselves,—you won't commit me,—for of course" (with a mysterious smile), of course *I* am speaking without authority,—you see Brighton enlarges so fearfully from season to season, and just at this present moment there are such a vast number of persons here whose rank makes them fancy themselves entitled to an invitation,—and who,—eh!—Fitzgerald?—But perhaps the less we say about it the better! I understand Lady Mary Milford is extremely angry; (a case in point you know!) but as I was saying last night to Bogg, Meerscham, and Clanhenny, if the Pavilion parties are to be crammed with all the nobodies in the land entitled to a coronet and supporters, they will be no better than the Duchess of Keswycke's or any other congregation of bores;—eh, Fitzgerald?"—

"Really, Sir Carmichael, you must excuse my becoming security for your aphorisms. I know nothing of the Pavilion projects, and have the honour to be her Grace's nephew."

"A thousand pardons, my dear Sir; but really the Duchess lives so completely out of the world that one forgets to whom she belongs, or who belongs to her. And by the way, my dear Lady Grasmere, pray allow me to offer you my congratulations on our friend the Countess's new conquest. Really, Brancepeth is no every-day victory. A man against whom so many manœuvres have been directed—a man who

stands so high with our illustrious friend—eh! Fitzgerald?"—

"Really, Sir Carmichael, I must request you to—"

"I have long perceived," resumed Domdaniel, wholly insensible to the withering look of contempt launched against him by the handsome dandy, "that Brancepeth had an attachment; but I acknowledge it did not strike me that so very unpopular a person as Countess Reppenheim—a woman so universally pronounced to be so very decided a bore—was—"

"He sat confounded; for the Countess having entered unannounced during his *tirade*, now stood opposite to him, waiting its conclusion.

Sir Carmichael consoled himself, as with a hasty bow he shuffled out of the room, with a hope that her Excellency was not sufficiently well furnished with his illustrious friend the Prince Regent's English, to be fully conscious of the extent of his own insolence.

CHAPTER VII.

Joy to you, Mariana ! love her, Angelo ;
 I have confessed her, and I know her virtue.
 So, bring us to our palace !

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

CHRISTMAS was past and over ;—the first week of the new year nearly expired ;—the Steynè half a foot deep in snow,—the Duchess of Keswycke shut up with the lumbago or (as her nephew reverently defined it) “some hackney coachman’s disorder ;” there was no hunting for the hussars ;—there were no balls for the slender young ladies ;—no new novels at the circulating libraries ;—no business doing,—no pleasure going on ;—and people began to find out that a country town, although boasting a royal Pavilion among its dwelling houses, can be as dull as the rest of the world during a foggy frost in the month of January. The Brighton newspapers, meanwhile attributed this general depression to the melancholy fact that his Royal Highness, their illustrious visitor, was suffering from a severe cold ;—Sir Carmichael Domdaniel secretly ascribed it to the arrival of Lady Beaulieu, by whom his honourable office of butt to the Royal circle was rendered somewhat laborious ;—Lady Edystone declared—but *her* declarations are such as few people venture to repeat ;—and Lady Grasmere, (poor Lady Grasmere !) although she declared nothing, was not the less of opinion that she was indebted for all *her* headaches and heartaches to the astounding discovery of Lord Brancepeth’s passion for her friend the Countess.

Byron has informed us that the heart of man has its ides and epochs of sensibility ; that March has its hares, and

May must have its heroine. But if there be a month peculiarly consecrated to the tender perplexities of the female heart, it is decidedly that of January. Every thing is so cheerless,—so cold,—so desolate ;—there is so little communication between house and house, man and man, or man and woman ;—no rides, no drives, no lounging visits, no sunshine, no flowers, no any thing to distract the attention of the fair afflicted from her own emotions. Seated in a well-scorched dress by the fire-side, a book in her hand, but her eyes engaged in building castles among the glowing coals, she reviews the past, and speculates concerning the future ;—talks o'er again antecedent conversations,—recalls to mind every look,—to heart every sigh ;—accuses herself of harshness, of want of candour, of blindness to her own happiness ;—then, sauntering to the window and casting a wistful gaze upon the sloppy state of the pavement or the slippery condition of the roads, retreats back again to her chimney corner with the mournful certainty that it is “a naughty day to swim in,” and that she has no chance of the visit she would give so much to secure.

Never had Lady Grassmere taken so much occasion as now to complain of the climate, and sigh for a change of weather !—never had she derived so little solace from those favourite pursuits of reading, working, painting, music, which, in London or at Richmond, caused her time to pass so lightly. She began to fancy she wanted to be at home again ; and, but for the dread of provoking the quizzing of Lady Sophia Clerimont and the malice of the Domdanielites, would have cut short her visit to Brighton, making a resolute effort to get rid of her vexations, and commence a new career of happiness and activity.

But if the first month of the year be unpropitious to ladies in love, what may it not be said to be to gentlemen in debt !—How despondingly do *they* contemplate the unsatisfactory face of nature,—with all the blue noses,—red eyes,—and muddy boots haunting its surface ;—human beings looking their ugliest, and even the brute creation, rough, shaggy, and forlorn !—A misty steam obscures the shop windows ;—the water-pipes enveloped in wisps of straw and the hall doors sprinkled with sand, impart a vulgar air even to the dwellings of the lordly ;—people elbow their way along the streets to keep their blood from stagnation ;—the most courteous greetings are hastily and sharply bestowed ;—the carriages roll past with the inmates as carefully secluded

from sight as in so many hearses. There is no satisfaction to be had in the external atmosphere;—the lounge's occupation's gone!

The month of January was in fact, a "lapse of time" which (like Cleopatra in her troubles) Lord Clanhenry had for many years past been anxious to "dream away."—Whether by his residence at Melton or Brighton at that business-like crisis, he contrived that his afflictions should pour in upon him per post;—or, whether, boldly facing his persecutors at his lion's den in the Albany, he was compelled to confront them face to face,—was comparatively unimportant. Between the first and fifteenth of January of every consecutive year, he found himself reduced to echo Sir John Falstaff's apophthegm that for consumption of the purse there is no remedy;—and to sigh that so few simple-hearted Justice Shallows remain in the world. He had not, like Fitzgerald, so much as an infirm old Duchess on whom to build his speculations; like the locust in the wilderness, he had eaten up the last green leaf; sold every reversion, mortgaged every acre, every contingency, every security, real, personal or conjectural. There was nothing left for him but a compromise with his creditors, or an heiress!

This conviction had brought him to Brighton. It is true he had no objection to dine three or four times a week at the best table in England,—listen three or four evenings to the most exquisite music in the most luxurious *locale*,—and sun himself in all the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious royalty. But fatal experience had taught him, and an extensive correspondence with his solicitors, bill-brokers, and bill-makers, daily reminded him of the lesson, that even his royal patron was not likely to rob the Exchequer on his behalf; and that Lady Beaulieu's smiles, however glorious to bask in, would do nothing for the removal of his embarrassments. He had debts, both of honour and dishonour, to settle, that admitted of no delay?—and let the town be as gloomy or the Pavilion as brilliant as it might, the main point was his acceptance by a widow with eight, or an heiress with ten thousand a year.

To achieve this desirable object, he had spared no pain to Lady Grasmere, no pains to himself: he had sneered away her confidence in the Countess, her satisfaction in her own position in the world; had quizzed her into odium in the Pavilion circle,—slandered her into contempt with the warm-hearted Brancepeth; and he now hailed with delight

the glow of feminine jealousy beaming in her restless eyes and transparent complexion, at the insinuations he was enabled to append to his edition of the state of affairs between her excellency of Prussia, and Brancepeth the defender of the faithful. He almost lamented the superfluous trouble he had taken previous to quitting London, to insinuate to his lordship that he was himself about to visit Brighton, less with any view of paying his court at the Pavilion, than in compliance with the eager request of poor dear Lady Grasmere that he would meet her there, and act as her cavalier of the season; a statement which, although it strongly provoked Lord Brancepeth to throw him out of the club window at which they were standing, he felt that he had no right to resent. The ignominy of the case rested with the Viscountess herself; who, for the sake of a little fashion—a collateral link with the unapproachable sphere of Exclusives—was induced to degrade herself by bestowing her smiles on a libertine of broken fortunes, approaching her with the undisguised intention of repairing them at her expense. Lord Brancepeth listened, less with indignation than disgust, to Clanhenry's allusions to the evenings he was in the habit of passing *tête-à-tête* with Lady Grasmere, and the billets with which she was daily, hourly, half-hourly in the habit of favouring him.

Such were the misrepresentations which caused that sudden alteration in his sentiments and demeanour, detected by her ladyship on her arrival at Brighton; and the coolness, with which her own quick sense of dignity induced her to mark the consciousness of the fact, only confirmed him in his belief of her attachment, or entanglement, or engagement with Clanhenry. Never, indeed, till that persuasion took possession of his mind, had he been fully aware of the admiration with which her beauty, her graces, and her feminine virtues had inspired him. His season for romance had long been over: at the sober age of two-and-forty, love and honeysuckles, and giggling young ladies, lose their attraction. He knew that *his* post of honour was *not* in a private station. He had official duties entailed on him by a high appointment in the household of the Regent, which, for some years to come, must render him a denizen of the Court. His anxiety, therefore, in the selection of a wife, was less directed to secure a pretty little doll to sit in his drawing-room, embroidering work-bags, or murdering Herz's sonatas for his amusement, after the fashionable

pattern of domestic life,—than to find a woman worthy to adorn his rank in the eyes of the world, as well as in his own;—qualified to walk hand in hand with him in the saloons of royalty; to participate with him in an endless round of festivity and dissipation, without any other object there than *his* approval; and to encounter the perilous ordeal of public admiration, without risk or hazard to her honour or his own.

On his first intimacy with Lady Grasmere, even before his eye was captivated and his powers of reasoning affected by her exquisite beauty, he hailed her as eminently qualified to fulfil his utmost exactions. He saw that she was graceful and highly accomplished. From all that he knew or could learn respecting her, he believed her to be as highly principled as she was mild and endearing. She was rich, and therefore above being swayed by interested motives, should she deign to honour him with her hand; and that she *would* deign, he gazed and gazed upon her beautiful face, fine figure, and radiant smiles, till he flattered himself into believing. The Viscountess had herself announced her intention of passing the winter at Brighton; and he had already formed his own of devoting himself there to her society, and tendering his hand, and coronet, and Brancepeth Court, to her acceptance. He felt that an over jealous susceptibility had only too long prolonged his celibacy, and would soon convert him into an old bachelor. He had hitherto cherished, with the tenacious egotism of his sex, an apprehension that his rank and fortune might exert a stronger influence than his personal merits, in aid of his courtship. But all these fears anxieties and misgivings were irrelevant in the case of a lovely Viscountess, in the independent possession of eight thousand a year!

Such were the auspicious prospects blighted by the cunning of Clanhenry, and the malice of Fitzgerald; and such the motives which induced the former to watch with triumphant satisfaction, on the ensuing evening at the Pavilion, the increased and increasing intimacy between Brancepeth and Countess Reppenheim. He saw that all was safe; that the Angelo of the Regent's Court (disappointed in his matrimonial projects on the wealthy widow) was fast falling into a snare of a very different description; and not even Lady Beaulieu observed with greater satisfaction the flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes of the guilty pair, as they sat apart on the silken divan encircling the saloon.

Very little, indeed, did he suspect that the conversation, exciting so many surmises, had commenced, on the part of the Countess, with a confession of indisposition, arising from her surprise at the coldness, strangeness, inconsistency, with which her visit had been received by Lady Grasmere. Foreigners do not cherish that excessive delicacy on matters connected with the heart, which distinguishes the more reserved nature of our countrymen. They talk of Love and Friendship, as they would of the fine arts, and discuss even their lovers and friends, as they would a favourite author or actress. Madam Reppenheim had no hesitation in acknowledging herself to be *souffrante*,—*accablée*,—*désolée*,—by the unaccountable caprice suddenly displayed towards her by a person so gentle, so considerate, and so warm-hearted as her dear Lady Grasmere!

Nothing could be more natural than for the still partial Brancepeth to ascribe this unsatisfactory change of character to the influence of her ladyship's accepted lover, the worldly-minded Clanhenry; nothing more indispensable ~~than~~ for the Countess to vindicate the outraged fame of her friend, by an assertion of Lady Grasmere's personal detestation of the obese dandy,—her abhorrence of his principles,—her contempt of his pretensions.

"I fear you are mistaken," replied his lordship. "I have good authority for knowing that Clanhenry is in immediate correspondence with your friend; and that he has visited her on the most familiar footing at Maplewood for some time past."

"We have scarcely been apart for the last four months," cried the Countess, warming in defence of her dear Lady Grasmere; "and it has often given me concern to observe the annoyance caused her by Lord Clanhenry's importunities. Nothing but the dread of his satirical wit, and the influence he exercises in the great world, has prevented her from forbidding him the house. To be made the subject of one of Lord Clanhenry's caricatures or lampoons, amounts, it appears, to banishment from society."

"Had not Lady Grasmere originally experienced some degree of predilection for those fashionable accomplishments—" Lord Brancepeth began: but the Countess would not suffer him to proceed.

"No, no, no!" she exclaimed. "Believe me, Eleanor has better taste. Nothing does she so unexceptionably revile, as the hollowness, *persiflage*, mockery, practised by such

men as Clanhenry and Fitzgerald. Nay, I have even heard her adduce, as the noblest trait in your own character (when citing Lord Brancepeth to me as the model of an English gentleman), your perfect frankness and candour."

In the ardour of defending an absent friend, the Countess did not perceive how far—how much too far—she had ventured; and Brancepeth, gratified beyond description, was careful not to call her attention to her own indiscretion, so as to induce her retraction of the flattering inference. He had just then, indeed, no further opportunity of persisting in an investigation so interesting to his feelings; for Lady Beaulieu, bent on removing the unhandsome prejudices maliciously excited against the new ambassadress, had seized the opportunity of pointing out to their illustrious host, (with whom she was an old-established friend and favourite,) the extreme beauty of Countess Reppenheim's countenance, as she sat engaged in animated conversation with his favourite Brancepeth. Touching, with a woman's ready tact, on every point of the Countess's history calculated to invest her with interest or importance in the eyes of the Regent, she described her intimacy with the beautiful Louisa of Prussia, (that heroine of royal romance!) and the high distinction with which she was still endowed at the court of her native country by the force of that touching reminiscence. No person was at hand to sneer,—to quiz,—or to decry; and Lady Beaulieu had the satisfaction to perceive that her plain tale produced the desirable effect on a mind naturally imbued with noble and generous impulses.

A few minutes afterwards, she had the gratification to perceive that his Royal Highness was sharing with Lord Brancepeth the animated smiles of the Countess; who, too much engrossed by the interest of the conversation in which she had been previously engaged, to remember one word of Clanhenry's malignant lessons or Fitzgerald's mystifications, now appeared before his discriminating eyes in her natural character of a mild, unassuming, simple, true-hearted woman. When the Prince, pleased by her gentle tones and graceful demeanour, proceeded to lead the discourse to her native court, her native country, her past life, her beloved mistress,—the genuine and unexaggerated tone of deep feeling with which she recurred to that almost sacred subject, interested him still more warmly in her favour. Countess Reppenheim possessed moreover a fund of valuable information connected with the late war and the imperial usurper,

derived from actual observation ; she had been present at that memorable interview when the Queen was sent to intercede, and intercede in vain, for the cession of Magdeburgh ; and, on a topic upon which she was so fully informed as well as so earnestly interested, was eloquent and impressive beyond the ordinary powers of her sex. It was not till he retired for the night, that his Royal Highness abandoned the post by her side, so long neglected, and now so highly and justly appreciated.

The circle was petrified. Domdaniel having retreated to a corner, was writhing his trunk from side to side in speechless agony.—The bore !—the *mouton qui rève* !—the rejected, contemned Countess Reppenheim had held the Prince Regent entranced in familiar conversation for one hour and forty minutes, by the musical pendule that told the golden hours on the chimney-piece !—Lady Beaulieu triumphed ; and nothing was talked of next day but the caprices of fortune, and the caprices of royalty. A more startling scene, however, was still in reserve. Before the close of the afternoon, cards were issued for an impromptu ball to be given on that very evening ; and amid the flutter of silks and satins occasioned by the suddenness of the event, a thousand mysterious rumours became partially audible.

Lord Clanhenry, was perhaps, the only man in Brighton whose ear they did not reach. In addition to his ordinary packet of long wafer-sealed epistles, the mail of that fatal night had brought down from town his man of business, wearing what the newspapers call a most imposing attitude. An interview was appointed between them that could not be neglected ; and two large tin cases filled with deeds of mortgage, annuity, insurance, assurance, and all the other paper currency of a ruined man, accompanied Mr. Cursitor to his lordship's lodgings. Argument was unavailing, evasion useless, compromise out of the question, procrastination impossible. Mr. Cursitor rendered it as apparent, not only as words, but as deeds could make it, that his lordship was an insolvent debtor, a bankrupt Peer ; and that, unless the matrimonial redemption announced in his recent letters were already secured, all was over with him !

On that point, Clanhenry took defensive ground. If not secured, it was secure ; and if Mr. Cursitor would do him the honour to dine with him, and remain four-and-twenty hours at Brighton, all should be satisfactorily arranged. He admitted it had cost him some scruples to sacrifice himself

for money ; but the call of honour should now be obeyed. He would dispatch his proposals in the course of the afternoon ; and Mr. Cursitor might bear back to London, early on the following morning, intelligence that Lady Gasmere was at his disposal, and her eight thousand a year at the disposal of his creditors. And while he hastened to pen an epistle to the Viscountess, profuse in protestations of disinterested and unlimited attachment, it certainly did impart some little additional triumph to his feelings to reflect on the mortification with which Fitzgerald, and the pain with which the outwitted Brancepeth would hear of his acceptance. Apprehensive that some latitude of speech might circulate a rumour of the object of Cursitor's visit, should he suffer the man of business to become a man of pleasure and escape out of his sight, his lordship renounced for that day his morning lounge and daily visits ; and, having received with the rest of the court circle an invitation for the evening, contented himself with the certainty that before it was time for him to dress and go to the ball, it would be time for his solicitor to undress and go to bed.

The fatal hour arrived ; and, nauseated by the first bad dinner he had eaten for six weeks and the first bottle of port he had tasted for six years,—heated, flushed, indigestive, having vainly waited till the last moment for Lady Gasmere's expected answer, he at length shook hands with Cursitor (who now saw two fat clients before him instead of one) and stepped into his cabriolet. He was very late ! When the great portal of the illuminated hall unclosed to receive him, the exhilarating sound of music instantly greeted his ear ; and groups of gay and glancing figures within, warned that the *fête* had already commenced ; he beheld the Bishopess pluming herself like a peacock, and the Physicianess strutting like a jackdaw. When lo ! just as he entered the ball room at one door, a general stir and subsequent stillness throughout the apartment warned him that the Prince Regent was entering on the other. All eyes were directed towards the spot. A lady splendidly attired was leaning on his Royal Highness's arm ; a lady, whose exquisite beauty now seemed to strike the beholders for the first time. It is true they had often seen her before ; often radiant as now with diamonds ; often arrayed as now in pearly satin. But never before had they beheld her dignified by the graceful homage of the Regent ; never before had they seen her blush so sweetly as when presented

by his Royal Highness to Lady Beaulieu and others of his peculiar circle, as "my new and amiable friend, Lady Grasmere."

"What the devil is the meaning of all this?" inquired Clanhenry (frighted from his propriety by port wine and consternation) of the panic-struck Domdaniel by his side.

"Only that Brancepeth having this morning, announced his approaching marriage to our illustrious friend, our illustrious friend most condescendingly resolved to—"

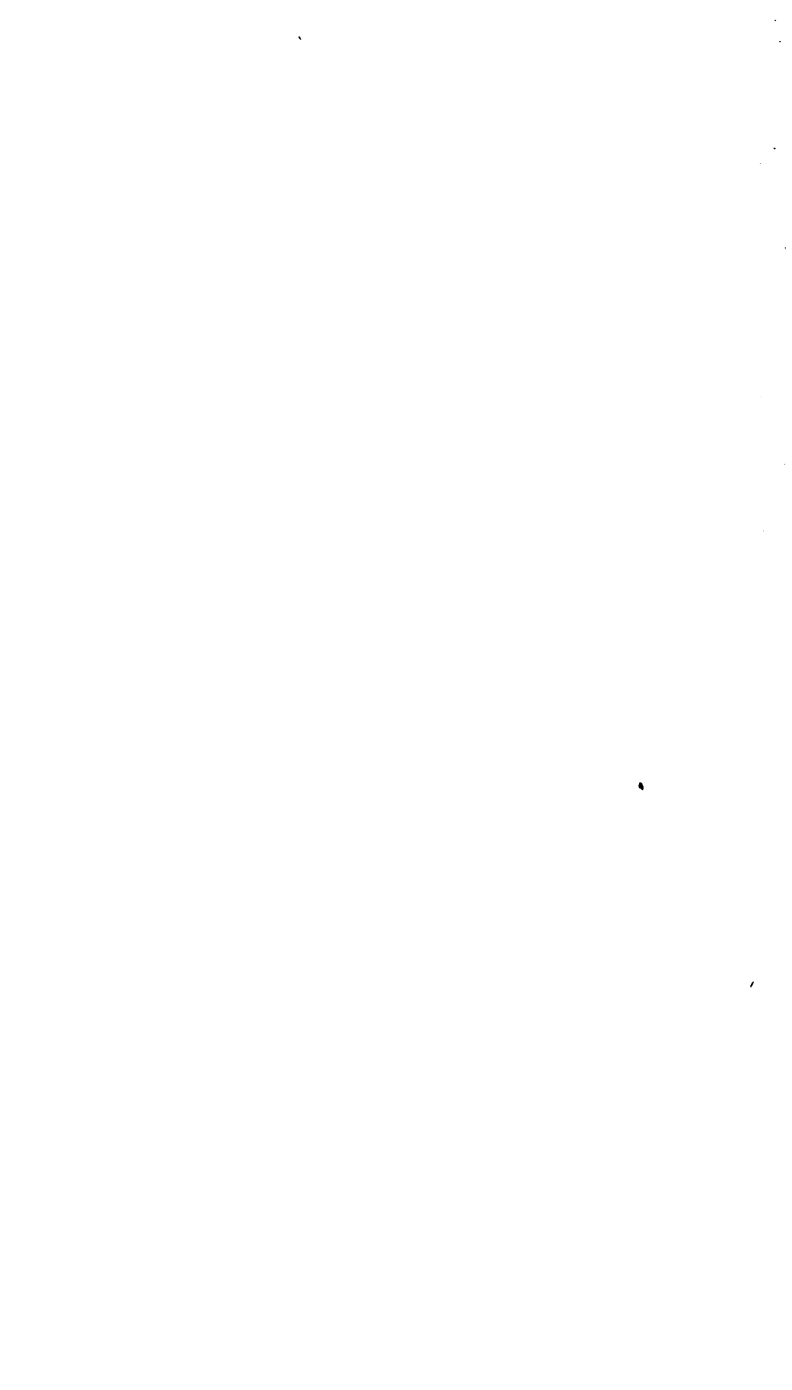
"Ay, ay! I understand," interrupted Clanhenry, shivering with the shock. "Poor Fitzgerald, eh!—One can't help feeling a little for poor Fitzgerald," he continued; suddenly striving to recover himself, and disguise his vexation from the K.C.B. of many echoes.

"Fitzgerald?—What can it signify to him? Have you not heard that Fred's engagement with little Clerimont is formally announced by Lady Mary? And the worst of it is, he has sold himself a blind bargain; for the Duchess of Keswycke died this morning, and has left him universal legatee! Handsome Fred, by waiting half a day longer, might have escaped a wife with a fiery head and still more fiery temper. But see; here comes Brancepeth to be congratulated. Clanhenry! where are you?—Has any one seen Lord Clanhenry?—God bless my soul! he must have disappeared while I was talking to him!"

No one *had* seen, no one *did* see his lordship again that night. But two days afterwards, when the Morning Post announced an approaching alliance between the Right Hon. Lord Brancepeth and the Dowager Viscountess Grasmere, the solemnization of which was to be honoured with the presence of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, an extract from the Brighton paper furthermore edified the creditors of the luckless Clanhenry with intelligence that his lordship was one of the passengers on board the last packet from Newhaven to Calais; an incident which caused no little scandal and speculation in the illustrious circle of—

THE PAVILION.

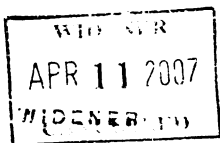




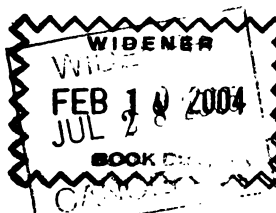
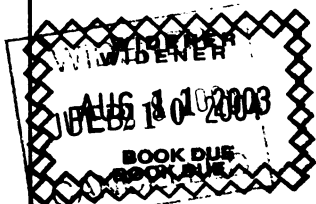
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